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FRANZ JOSEPH AND BISMARCK

THE DIPLOMACY OF AUSTRIA BEFORE THE WAR OF 1866

BY
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TO
A. K. C.

PREFACE

Bismarck's diplomacy in the 1860's has been treated by many historians; Franz Joseph's by few. The reasons for this are obvious. A brilliant success is more interesting than a lost cause. Moreover, the printed sources for the activities of the Prussian statesman have swelled since the 1890's to the proportions of a veritable flood, while the revelations of Austrian diplomacy long resembled the merest trickling spring. In the imperial Habsburg monarchy, loyalty to the dynasty and aristocratic pride imposed an exceptional silence. With the fall of the monarchy, however, the official attitude changed overnight. The secret documents in the state archives were thrown open without restriction to the year 1895. This liberal example was followed by a few private individuals. The heirs of Count Rechberg permitted a study of that minister's personal papers. The descendants of Franz Joseph himself began what one may hope is to be a publication of all of the Emperor's letters, allowing for the first time truly intimate glimpses of that heretofore somewhat obscure character. Finally, the *Anschluss* question, and Professor Kaindl, inaugurated in academic realms a revival of the old *Gross-deutsch-Kleindeutsch* controversy, which has again directed the attention of scholars and students to the period before 1870.

A foreigner who enters a field already explored by many capable German and Austrian investigators should, perhaps, offer an explanation. The writer is of the opinion that it is easier for a non-German at a distance of 3,000 miles to study the Austro-Prussian conflict objectively than for one born in the traditions of those antagonistic ideals. The author's admiration for the excellent qualities both of North Germans and South Germans, gained at first hand during a residence of

several years in central Europe, is warm and impartial. This impartiality will, he hopes, be found reflected in all judgments in the following pages. A distinction has been made however between judgments and descriptive expositions, and he asks that this distinction be carefully noted by the reader. Much of the work is an exposition of Austrian policy. As such it bears the color of the Austrians' attitudes and feelings. On the other hand, critical interpretation will be found chiefly in chapters iv and xiii. In all cases statements of fact have been based as far as possible upon incontrovertible sources.

Whatever one may think of the writer's objectivity, it will be evident that he has drawn his material from a wider range of documentary sources than any previous writer upon these years. Heinrich von Sybel knew only the Berlin papers, with the result that his opinions of Austrian policy are sometimes ludicrous, and always tinged with his nationalistic Prussian convictions. Heinrich Friedjung, the Austrian historian of the conflict of 1866, was not permitted to delve into the secret documents of the *Ballplatz*. Erich Brandenburg's fine-tempered studies had no broader basis of unpublished material, though a much broader point of view, than Sybel's work. Alfred Stern used the papers in Vienna and Berlin at certain focal points only, and his impartial account is necessarily very brief. Friedrich Thimme, the editor of Bismarck's official instructions, using only Sybel's material, has returned to the Sybel interpretation. Egmont Zechlin's admirable study stops short of the crucial years. Most of the smaller monographs on individual aspects and incidents of the period are written from the resources of one archive only. The result is too often a one-sided view, with all that that implies. The elusive *arrière-pensées* of a Bismarck or a Schwarzenberg cannot be captured in that manner. Their masterly diplomacy has a thousand facets, which must be viewed from as many angles as possible to do it justice. An adequate understanding cannot be obtained from one set of documents or even from two. It remained for Lawrence D. Steefel in his recent study

of Bismarck's diplomacy in the Schleswig-Holstein crisis of 1863-1864 to inaugurate a wider exploitation of unpublished material, by utilizing the archives of five European capitals. This new method will be carried to its logical conclusion in the great publication of documents on Prussian foreign policy sponsored by Professor Brandenburg and others. The present writer aims to supplement Steefel on Austrian policy, and similarly to exploit the years from June 1864 to the outbreak of war in June 1866. He has viewed the struggle for German hegemony from the vantage points of Vienna, Berlin, and London. For the crisis of 1865, he has found the Baden documents also of value. For the Paris listening-post, the copious *Origines diplomatiques de la guerre de 1870-1871* are adequate. And the Russian documents could hardly add much of significance. All the available monographs and printed materials appearing before July 1933 have been examined, and their distinctive contributions utilized.

The present study is, then, an attempt to describe in greater detail the diplomacy of Austria before the disaster of 1866, and to interpret it more accurately than has been done heretofore. In addition, the policy of Bismarck toward Austria has been reexamined and, in important points, reappraised. New light has been thrown upon the relations between Austria and the individual German states, especially Bavaria; upon the authorship and negotiation of the Gastein convention; upon Bismarck's offers of compensation for the proposed annexation of Schleswig-Holstein; upon the "peace offensive" of Count Mensdorff in March and April 1866; upon the heroic attempt of Gablenz to avert the impending war; in short, upon almost every phase of Austria's relations with her German neighbors and the powers during these years. The author does not aim to debate the larger implications of the struggle between the *Grossdeutsch* and *Kleindeutsch* ideals. A wider discussion of the historical and philosophical background can be omitted the more appropriately since it is

to be thoroughly treated by Professor Heinrich Ritter von Srbik in the not too distant future.

What appears now in the chapters below is the *official* diplomacy of the Austrian foreign office during 1864-1866, and the *personal* share of Franz Joseph and his individual advisers in that official policy, so far as these influences can be detected and isolated. Despite the former secrecy of archives, and the silence of ministers and associates concerning Franz Joseph himself, Friedjung long ago penetrated the mystery surrounding His All-Highest Majesty in the exalted atmosphere of the Hofburg, and reverently but firmly placed the chief responsibility where it belonged. The more recent opening of the state collections, affording glimpses of the Emperor in his council of ministers and in correspondence with others, has served to emphasize Franz Joseph's responsibility for the fateful direction of Austrian diplomacy in the struggle culminating in 1866.

* * * * *

During the years in which this study has been taking shape, it has accumulated a large indebtedness to the help of others, which I am happy to acknowledge here.

I wish to thank the members of the Department of History of Harvard University collectively, and Professors W. S. Ferguson, C. H. Haskins, W. L. Langer, and S. B. Fay individually, for generous aid toward my research abroad and the publication of this book, the nucleus of which was presented as a doctoral thesis at Harvard. It was Professor Robert H. Lord, formerly of Harvard, who first gave me the impulse to study Bismarck's diplomacy. Large portions of the manuscript have been read by Professors Langer, Fay, and C. K. Webster, by my former teacher Professor Arthur Lyon Cross of Michigan, and by Professor Walter Phelps Hall of Princeton. For their immeasurable services in weeding out errors of fact and imperfections of style, I am under the deepest obligations. I wish also to thank Dr. Helen B. Bates of Ann Arbor, Michigan, for able assistance with the

proof-reading; and several of my colleagues at Princeton for helpful advice, particularly Professors Robert G. Albion, Raymond J. Sontag, and Gray C. Boyce.

I take this opportunity to express my gratitude also to the following archive officials for their cordial and substantial cooperation: Herr Legationsrat Dr. Hermann Meyer, former director of the *Hauptarchiv des Auswärtigen Amtes* in Berlin, and the lamented Herr Geheimrat Spiess, Herr Archivrat Dr. Hermann von Petersdorff and the late Direktor Dr. Melle Klinkenborg of the Dahlem archives; Herr Geheimrat Dr. G. Schuster, director, and Herr Dr. Heinrich Otto Meisner, of the *Brandenburg-Preussisches Hausarchiv*; Mr. Stephen Gaselee, librarian of the British Foreign Office, for permission to use the British documents, which were not available to most students at that time; Mr. A. E. Stamp and Mr. Headlam of the Public Record Office; Mr. David A. Salmon, chief of the bureau of indexes and archives, Department of State, Washington, D. C.; and especially those excellent and tireless archivists and officials of the *Haus-, Hof-, und Staatsarchiv* in Vienna.

At one time or another during the past ten years I have received inspiration and valuable hints from conversations with Professor Dr. Erich Brandenburg of Leipzig, Professor Dr. Alfred Franzis Pribram and Dr. Egon Count Corti of Vienna, and Professor G. P. Gooch of London. The most constant and substantial help has been that of my mother and my wife; my debt to them cannot be adequately expressed in words.

CHESTER W. CLARK

Princeton, New Jersey,
January, 1934.

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NOTE ON ABBREVIATIONS

The following abbreviations have been used in the footnotes of this volume:

- AGEV . . Archives of the German Embassy, Vienna, Austria
BGL *General-Landesarchiv*, Karlsruhe, Baden, Germany.
BPH *Brandenburg-Preussisches Hausarchiv*, Berlin-Charlottenburg
F, O. . . . Public Record Office, London.
HAA *Hauptarchiv des Auswärtigen Amtes*, Berlin.
HHS *Haus-, Hof-, und Staatsarchiv*, Vienna
KAV *Kriegsarchiv*, Vienna.
PGS *Preussisches Geheimes Staatsarchiv*, Berlin-Dahlem.
G W. . . . *Bismarck, Die Gesammelten Werke* (Berlin 1924 ff.)
tg telegram.

As the majority of documents cited in the footnotes are found in the *Politisches Archiv* of the Vienna *Haus-, Hof-, und Staatsarchiv*, the HHS symbol has been omitted after such documents, except where they come from other *Abteilungen* of the archives, such as the *Kabinettsarchiv*, or from special collections like the *Nachlass Rechberg*. All documents from other archives are cited with the proper symbol.

As the German and Prussian archives have been consolidated to a certain extent since I used them, references to them may not in all cases correspond to the present location of the documents in question. But the originals can of course be found by consulting the indexes of those archives.

FRANZ JOSEPH AND BISMARCK
THE DIPLOMACY OF AUSTRIA BEFORE
THE WAR OF 1866

CHAPTER I

SCHWARZENBERG AND AFTER

For two generations after the overthrow of Napoleon, no state in Europe commanded a more influential position than the Habsburg empire, that great complex of nationalities in the basins of the Danube and the Po. By joining France's enemies in 1813, Austria had struck a decisive blow at the Napoleonic empire; and at Vienna, in 1814, Austria's minister, Metternich, presided over the restoration of European boundaries. It was chiefly from Vienna that the policy of "legitimacy" and the *status quo* was disseminated during more than thirty years. When in 1848 the "Metternich system" broke down, Prince Schwarzenberg soon repaired the damage, and at his early death in 1852 Austrian prestige in Germany and in Europe shone again undimmed.

Little over a dozen years later this prestige and power were gone. A new Napoleon had grasped the leadership in Europe, a new Italy had driven Austria north of the Alps, and a new Prussia had wrested the supremacy in Germany from the Imperial House on the battlefields of 1866. Yet only two years before this final disaster, Austria had been united in alliance with the very power which dethroned her. So sudden a change from covenanted friendship to open war in so short a time, was not only an achievement of the diplomacy of Bismarck, but was also a result of the foreign policy of the Danube monarchy since 1848. This policy in turn was conditioned by the weaknesses and the alterations in the internal structure of the empire prior to the struggle of 1866.

AUSTRO-PRUSSIAN DISCORDS

The foreign policy of the Austrian empire in the mid-nineteenth century was complicated both by the variety of nation-

alities under the Habsburg aegis, and also by Austria's dual role as European great power and leading German state. From the latter position was derived a large share of the monarchy's prestige, the presidency of the Frankfurt Diet being the more modern and effective form of the Holy Roman Emperorship.¹ In the Metternich era, Prussia had acquiesced in Austria's primacy in Germany. The Austrian minister had handled the northern rival with consummate tact, and together the two states had made common cause against the "third Germany" of the smaller states.²

But the storm-wind of the revolutions of 1848 aroused passions which sadly altered the relations between the two German powers. If the chasm between Austria and Prussia was dug by the people of the *Pauluskirche*, it was not closed by their governments. The victory of the Small-Germany party and their offer of the German crown to Frederick William IV, though rejected, was an open challenge to Austria. The Prussian monarch's subsequent attempt to combine the lesser states more closely under his Union banner, bade fair to wrest from the young Emperor Franz Joseph I⁸ his most cherished possession, the primacy in Teutonic Europe. To preserve this was one of Schwarzenberg's chief aims. His second objective was to bring the entire monarchy—Hungarians, Slavs, and Italians included—into a new Germanic federation, so as to secure the military aid of all Germany in case of an outside attack, even upon Austria's remotest dominions. By skilful diplomacy, Schwarzenberg lured the larger states away from the Small-Germany camp, made dexterous use of Prussian

¹ Cf. Franz Joseph's remark to King William I of Prussia at Teplitz in 1860 (Hermann Oncken: *Grossherzog Friedrich I. von Baden und die deutsche Politik von 1854-1871* I, p. 198).

² "Metternich strove always to lead the rival, never to force her to her knees." He did not admit Prussia to complete parity, but if he had survived the crisis of 1848, he would probably have been forced to concede her greater influence in North Germany (Heinrich Ritter von Srbik: *Metternich der Staatsmann und der Mensch* [Munich 1925] II, pp. 392, 410, 413, 415).

³ The Emperor always signed his name "Franz Joseph," not Josef. Despite this fact, Stern, Redlich, and others use the latter form.

blunders to gain the support of Russia, mobilized his army in reply to Prussian mobilization, and forced Frederick William to renounce his Union, and to recognize Austrian supremacy, at Olmütz in 1850.⁴

This "humiliation" the Prussians long remembered. Rightly or wrongly, they ascribed to the Austrian minister the policy of "avilir puis démolir la Prusse." Frederick William, renouncing his attempts at hegemony, offered a three year treaty of alliance and guarantee of Austria's territorial integrity. Thus Schwarzenberg virtually secured the two major objectives of his diplomacy. Yet the great majority of Prussians felt, as did Manteuffel, that "the strong man takes perhaps one step backward, but keeps his eye firmly on his goal." Prince William of Prussia, a stronger man than the King, his brother, was deeply embittered at Olmütz,—and this man was destined to rule in Berlin. Unwittingly Schwarzenberg had watered the seeds of the war of 1866.

Shortly after this statesman's death in 1852, Austria temporarily gave up the idea of wresting the commercial leadership of Germany from Prussia.⁵ On February 19, 1853 a treaty was signed with the *Zollverein* by which Austria contented herself with Prussia's promise to discuss in 1860 the possibility of a tariff-union between the two territories.

So much the more had the young Austrian Emperor determined to keep a firm hold upon the political hegemony of Germany. The old Confederation had finally been restored in the same loose-jointed conservative form as before 1848. But the

⁴ For Austro-Prussian diplomatic relations in 1849-1852, see especially Friedjung: *Oesterreich von 1848 bis 1860* II, pp. 1-134; Eduard Heller: *Fürst Felix zu Schwarzenberg, Mitteleuropas Vorkämpfer* (Vienna 1933); Friedrich Meinecke: *Radowitz und die deutsche Revolution* (Berlin 1913); Brandenburg: *Die Reichsgründung* I, pp. 302-343; Sybel: *Die Begründung des deutschen Reiches* I, pp. 239-317, II, pp. 3-72; Stern: *Geschichte Europas* VII, pp. 395-467.

⁵ See Heinrich Friedjung: "Mitteleuropäische Zollunionspläne 1849-1853," in *Historische Aufsätze* pp. 64-90, and Alfred Gärtner: *Der Kampf um den Zollverein zwischen Oesterreich und Preussen von 1849 bis 1853* (Strassburg 1911).

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alignment of political forces was different. Austria now saw her leadership actively contested, and she attempted to play off the smaller states against her rival.⁶ Her influence as the presiding power, her devotion to the *Staatenbund* in contrast to the *Bundesstaat* ideal, the pious awe of the German rulers for the age-old Habsburg imperial line, and their fear of the Hohenzollerns,—these elements gave Austria the advantage over Prussia. But in the long run this was a dangerous game to play, unless Austria could count on the support of outside powers. On the one hand, the small states were unreliable and weak allies. On the other hand, Prussia was antagonized. It boded no good for Austria that the Prussian envoy at the Diet from 1851 to 1859, Otto von Bismarck, saw his country treated like a *parvenu* by the Austrian representative, and outvoted at times by a hostile majority. At first a believer in the need for Austro-Prussian solidarity, Bismarck came to realize that the Danube monarchy would probably yield no hair's-breadth of her primacy, unless forced to do so by the sword.⁷ As yet, however, this conviction of the Prussian envoy made no impression upon Berlin court circles. While Frederick William ruled, the supremacy of Austria in the Diet was secure.

The end of the 1850's brought great changes in both the rival states.⁸ Not only was the new Prussian Regent made of

⁶For the diplomacy at the Diet from 1851 to 1859, see Arnold O. Meyer: *Bismarcks Kampf mit Oesterreich am Bundestag zu Frankfurt*, as an antidote to Bismarck's own dispatches and letters (*Bismarck, Die Gesammelten Werke*, vols I and II, edited by Hermann von Petersdorff).

⁷For the development of Bismarck's ideas, see Max Lenz: *Geschichte Bismarcks* pp. 62-94, especially p. 74; Erich Marcks: *Otto von Bismarck, Ein Lebensbild* pp. 29-42; Brandenburg II, pp. 17-25; Johannes Ziekursch: *Politische Geschichte des neuen deutschen Kaiserreichs* I, pp. 73-95. The most recent and most elaborate analysis of the fundamentals of Bismarck's character and political system is by Egmont Zechlin: *Bismarck und die Grundlegung der deutschen Grossmacht* pp. 88-167, especially pp. 102-105, 115, 118-143, for his policy toward Austria.

⁸For the following, see Freiherr von Hengelmüller: "Graf Alois Karolyi," in *Deutsche Revue* XXXVIII, 1913, Heft 2, pp. 154 ff., 277 ff., Heft 3, pp. 33 ff.; Friedrich Engel-Janosi. *Graf Rechberg, Vier Kapitel zu seiner und Oesterreichs Geschichte* pp. 45-58, 71-73; Sybel II, pp. 229-273; Stern VIII, here and there in chapters vii, viii, and x; Zechlin pp. 54-68.

firmer metal. His consuming interest was the army, and he longed to gain the command, if not of all the federal forces, at least of the North-German contingents in peace and war. He saw his opportunity when Franz Joseph became embroiled with Italy in 1859. Unfortunately for Austria, Schwarzenberg's treaty of alliance and guarantee existed no longer. In 1859, the only political obligation that Prussia and the German states owed the Habsburger was the general obligation to defend German federal territory. While Prussia's Rhineland was thus protected, the bulk of Austria's Italian possessions were not. Franz Joseph therefore made several attempts to induce the Prince Regent to go beyond his obligations and take the field with him against France and Italy.⁹ One after the other failed, however, because the Emperor was unwilling to confer upon his rival the command of the army of the Confederation. Rather than yield his position in Germany, the young Habsburger suddenly came to terms with Napoleon and yielded Lombardy. His bitterness over Prussia's "desertion" burst forth in the famous manifesto from Laxenburg, wherein he blamed his defeat upon the defection of "his oldest and most trusted ally."¹⁰ This only added to William's pique at Austria for refusing his proffered mediation and coming to terms with Napoleon behind his back. For a time the two rivals seemed as far apart as at Olmütz.

Within six months, however, Franz Joseph and his new foreign minister, Count Rechberg, were trying to restore friendly relations with Berlin.¹¹ Events in Italy which made the Zurich treaty a dead letter, the unreliability of Louis Napoleon, the realization of Austria's fatal isolation in Europe, all contributed

⁹ The missions of the Archduke Albrecht, and of General Windischgrätz, to Berlin, and of General Willisen to Vienna (Stern VIII, pp. 315-316, 344, 356, 558-563; and Stern's article: "Die Mission des Feldmarschalls Fürsten Windischgrätz nach Berlin im Jahre 1859," in *Forschungen zur brandenburgischen und preussischen Geschichte* XLIII, 1930, pp. 339-345).

¹⁰ In private, he called Prussia "ignominious scum," a rare outburst for the self-contained Emperor (*Briefe Kaiser Franz Josephs an seine Mutter* p. 292).

¹¹ Count Bernhard von Rechberg, former Austrian envoy at the Diet, was called to the ministry of foreign affairs during the crisis of 1859.

to turn Franz Joseph toward a policy of alliances with Prussia and Russia. The Austrian envoy in Berlin, Count Karolyi, a man of moderate and conciliatory temperament, was entrusted with the task of negotiating a treaty with Prussia. For several months during the spring of 1860 and again in 1861, he held conversations with the well-disposed minister of foreign affairs, Baron Schleinitz. But they came to nothing because Austria would not concede as much as the more intransigent members of the Prussian cabinet, and even the King, desired.

More fruitful was the Teplitz meeting between William and Franz Joseph, at which their personal friendship was restored.¹² Here, if ever, was the best opportunity for the two monarchs to unite on the basis of mutual concessions. Franz Joseph was delighted to find that William's distaste for the Bonapartes was as great as his own. But on other fundamental issues no unity was achieved. To William's question whether there could not be an alternation in the presidency at Frankfurt, Franz Joseph replied that such a change would constitute "a new defeat for Austria." He tried to satisfy the King by hinting that Prussia might take command of the federal troops in the next war against France. But he could not secure a written promise of aid from William in case of an attack by Napoleon. Though the Emperor left with the verbal assurance that he could count on Prussia's help even without a treaty,¹³ the fact remained that he and Rechberg, partly because of their own obduracy, were not able to attain their time-honored objective: either they must do without a formal Prussian alliance, or they must abandon their exclusive supremacy in Germany.

In his steadfast determination to maintain his "primacy," the Emperor was encouraged by the influential expert for Ger-

¹² For the Teplitz interview, see Sybel II, pp. 269-271; Oncken: *Friedrich von Baden* I, pp. 197-202; Hengelmüller, in *Deutsche Revue* XXXVIII, Heft 2, pp. 281-283.

¹³ William considered this a promise on his part, and he renewed it in 1861 (William to Friedrich of Baden, May 1, 1861; Oncken I, p. 257).

man affairs, von Biegeleben.¹⁴ On the other hand, Franz Joseph's own foreign minister began now to toy with the idea of conceding to Prussia the right to alternate in the presidency of the Diet.¹⁵ Rechberg thus betrayed a desire to break with the post-Olmütz policy, — and he found himself crossed by his own underling, Biegeleben. This difference of opinion was symptomatic of a deeper divergence between the two men, the most influential official counsellors of Franz Joseph on foreign affairs during these years. Of fundamental significance for Austrian policy, it may well be considered in some detail at this point.

* * * *

Count Bernhard von Rechberg und Rothenlöwen, and Ludwig Maximilian Baron von Biegeleben were South Germans, not Austrians, born within six years of each other. The senior in age as well as in service for the Habsburgs was Rechberg, who began his career in 1829 as attaché in Berlin.¹⁶ Ludwig von Biegeleben, born in Darmstadt in 1812, gained an acquaintance with Austrian diplomacy through eight years' experience as Hessian chargé in Vienna.¹⁷ In 1850 he entered Austrian

¹⁴ *Memoirs of Friedrich Ferdinand Count von Beust* (London 1887) I, p. 201.

¹⁵ Sybel II, p. 302. The grant of this right was, indeed, publicly hinted by the Count, but coupled with and dependent upon a complete and total guarantee of all Austria's possessions by the entire *Bund* (Memorandum of November 5, 1861, in *Staatsarchiv* II, pp. 117-123).

¹⁶ For Rechberg's career, character, and policies, see Engel-Janosi: *Graf Rechberg*; Friedjung: *Der Kampf um die Vorherrschaft in Deutschland* I, pp. 45-48, and essay on Rechberg in *Historische Aufsätze* pp. 294-321, reprinted from *Biographisches Jahrbuch und deutscher Nekrolog* IV, 1900; A. O. Meyer: *Bismarcks Kampf mit Oesterreich* pp. 275-286.

¹⁷ For Biegeleben, see the sympathetic biography by his son, Rüdiger von Biegeleben; Alfred von Vivenot's sketch in the *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie* II, pp. 620-622; Friedjung's admirable summary of Biegeleben's character and policies, in *Kampf um die Vorherrschaft* I, pp. 104-107; and the criticism of Friedjung in R[üdiger] von B[iegeleben]: "Zur Vorgeschichte des Krieges 1866, Graf Rechberg und von Biegeleben," in *Historisch-politische Blätter* CXXIII, 1899, pp. 587-600. Of supreme importance is Biegeleben's memorandum for Franz Joseph in October 1864, printed by Engel-Janosi in his article, "Die Krise des Jahres 1864 in Oesterreich," in *Historische Studien A. F. Pribram zum 70. Geburtstag Dargebracht* (cited henceforth, Engel-Janosi: *Krise*).

service, becoming *Hofrat* and *Referent* for German affairs in the foreign office within two years. Both men were Catholics, both conservative, though Biegeleben was the more modern in his respect for public opinion and his desire to make use of its power for the good of the state. A member of the bureaucracy, he did not abhor the new tendencies as did Rechberg, the aristocrat. Both were so devoted to the German culture and traditions of the empire, that the description of Biegeleben's political aims, given by his friend Vivenot, might equally well have been written of Rechberg: "the preservation of the existing order, the development of the German federation, the upholding of legitimacy, and the maintenance of the rights of the treaties."¹⁸

Having taken an intimate part in the stirring events of 1849 in Frankfurt, both appreciated keenly the dangers latent in Prussia's Small-Germany ambitions. To both it became clear that the more concessions Austria made, the more Prussia wanted. Both saw in Bismarck the protagonist of all that Austria dreaded, and both had come to the conclusion that sooner or later a war with the northern rival was inevitable. The crisis, both agreed, might arise at the next Italian attack on Venetia, when Prussia would present her bill, and if not paid promptly, would go over to the enemy's camp. Yet neither believed that the Austrian monarchy would be able to wage a titan struggle until the festering sore of Hungary had been healed.¹⁹ So far the two men saw eye to eye.

How to meet this Prussian menace, was the point at which Biegeleben and Rechberg parted company. Each followed the great master under whom each had first served the Habsburgs. Biegeleben, like Schwarzenberg, who had called him to the *Ballplatz* in 1850, wished to exploit the federal constitution in its literal sense, to keep Prussia subordinate, and he did not scruple to play off the *Mittelstaaten* against her. His sole formula for the bridging of the gulf between the rival powers was

¹⁸ Vivenot, *loc. cit.* p. 621.

¹⁹ Biegeleben's memorandum (Engel-Janosi, *Krise* p. 192), Rechberg's view in Engel-Janosi: *Rechberg* pp. 60, 125.

this: Prussia to renounce her aims, Austria to forgive and forget.²⁰

The minister of foreign affairs, on the other hand, in the manner of the elder Metternich with whom he had remained in close personal relations after 1848, preferred to temper the harsh letter of the federal law by treating Prussia more nearly like an equal in German affairs. The federal tie was not strong enough, he wrote in 1856, to support the rivalry of its two great powers, and he warned the Emperor against the opposite views of Biegeleben.²¹ But the impressionable *Hofrat*, fashioning his high-handed policy at his desk in the *Ballplatz*, was dangerously free from responsibility for its consequences. The president of the Diet, Rechberg, was instructed to combat Prussia in every way, and to win over the small states to Austria. It speaks volumes for Rechberg's diplomatic ability that he not only won back these states, but also to a certain degree gained the confidence of the super-sensitive Bismarck, his contemporary in Frankfurt. Yet the net result of Rechberg's Frankfurt mission was to have outplayed Prussia. Bismarck attributed his recall to the influence of the Austrian delegate, and — strange trick of fate — anti-Prussian Biegeleben proposed pro-Prussian Rechberg as foreign minister in 1859, because of the latter's success against Prussia in the Diet.²²

Side by side in the *Ballhausplatz*, the new minister and his important adviser maintained friendly personal relations, while their different attitudes in German matters became more and more evident. At times the *Referent's* influence upon the Emperor overshadowed that of the minister, for Biegeleben's manner and style were more incisive and convincing than Rechberg's. When the latter asked to be allowed to resign, his request was ungraciously rejected, and, as in Frankfurt, so in Vienna he

²⁰ Rudiger von Biegeleben. *Biegeleben* p. 270.

²¹ Friedjung' *Historische Aufsätze* p. 302 f. Cf. Rechberg to Buol, June 17, 1857 (Meyer p. 549 ff.).

²² Ottokar Lorenz: *Kaiser Wilhelm und die Begründung des deutschen Reiches* p. 44.

was often forced to concur in acts which he inwardly condemned.

In his general opposition to Rechberg's policy, Biegeleben was afforded valuable aid by a statesman who had been prominent in the cabinet since 1860. This man was Anton Ritter von Schmerling, the "father of the Austrian constitution." The influence of Schmerling upon foreign relations, and the vital importance of the internal weaknesses and constitutional alterations upon the external policy of the monarchy, require us to leave the *Ballplatz* for a few moments, and ensconce ourselves in the so-called "ministry of state" (*Staatsministerium*) for a brief examination of the internal history of Austria after 1850.

CONSTITUTIONAL EXPERIMENTATION IN AUSTRIA

Schwarzenberg's system of centralized absolutism, the three pillars of which were the army, the bureaucracy, and the Catholic Church, was continued and elaborated by Baron Alexander Bach, the influential minister for internal affairs.²³ The objects of Baron Bach, like those of his predecessor, were the Germanization of the Magyars, the Slavs, and the other nationalities within the empire; and the maintenance of the existing order by the suppression of all agitation for liberal institutions and for freedom of speech, of the press, and of public worship.

But this "Bach system" engendered the germs of its own decay. The consequence of the restrictions on political activity was stagnation and intellectual apathy among the great majority of the people. To make matters worse the wavering policy of Count Buol during the Crimean war estranged Austria's best friends in Europe; and the empire emerged from the

²³ For the internal history of Austria between 1848 and 1864, see Heinrich Friedjung: *Oesterreich von 1848 bis 1860* I and II, to 1854 only; Josef Redlich: *Das Oesterreichische Staats- und Reichsproblem* I and II; Viktor Bibl: *Der Zerfall Oesterreichs* II, pp. 161-195, 221-237, 255-274; Alfred Stern: *Geschichte Europas seit den Verträgen von 1815* VII, here and there, VIII, pp. 391-432; Richard Charnatz: *Oesterreichs Innere Geschichte* I, a brief account. Valuable side-lights are to be found in Walter Rogge: *Oesterreich von Vilagos bis zur Gegenwart* I and II, from the German liberal viewpoint; and Eduard Wertheimer: *Graf Julius Andrássy* I.

Italian war with the loss of a rich province and with a staggering burden of debt. Only seven years after the death of Schwarzenberg, the empire lay defeated, friendless, reduced in size, its intellectual classes restive, its nationalities embittered, and its finances in chaos.

Realizing that some measure of reform was inescapable, Franz Joseph dismissed Baron Bach and issued a manifesto announcing his intention to introduce "opportune improvements in legislation and administration." This promise raised popular expectations to so high a pitch, that when, by an imperial patent of March 5, 1860, a mere "assembly of notables" was created, it was received by the people with a shrug of the shoulders. The Hungarian Liberals and their leader, Franz Deák, who demanded autonomy for their nationality, rejected this olive branch with disgust. But six of the "Old Conservatives," the great Magyar landholders, were persuaded to take seats in the new *Reichsrat*. Before the end of its four-months session, the house had split roughly into two factions, holding different theories of government, corresponding to the interests of two large classes in the empire: the city-dwelling and office-holding middle class, and the landowning aristocracy. The former desired centralization of administration in the hands of a more liberal Vienna government, the latter advocated decentralization ("federalism"), or the transfer of more power to the provincial assemblies controlled by the nobles. The Federalists triumphed, and their victory was crowned by the so-called October diploma, which granted enlarged powers both to the *Reichsrat* and to the local assemblies, but kept them in the hands of the aristocrats.²⁴

Their success however was short-lived. In Hungary, the October diploma was flatly rejected by Deák, who stood firmly by his demand for the constitution of 1848, and the great majority of Hungarians were with him. In Austria, it bitterly disappointed the centralistic bureaucracy and the liberal *bourgeoisie*, whose cooperation was so necessary for averting bank-

²⁴ Imperial patent of October 20, 1860.

ruptcy. With Hungary unappeased, and the financial "barons" unsatisfied, Franz Joseph was forced to retreat a step farther.

To the important post of *Staatsminister* he appointed a man whose name had been long on people's tongues. Anton von Schmerling had played an important part in the Frankfurt parliament of 1848 as a moderate liberal.²⁵ Then as minister of justice in Schwarzenberg's cabinet, he had set his face against reaction, until forced to resign. In the popular mind, Schmerling stood for constitutional government, judicial and administrative reform, improvement of the lot of the middle classes, encouragement of cultural pursuits, and the policy of a "Great-Germany" under Austrian leadership. In reality, he had no great sympathy for the masses, and "considered the essence of the state to lie in its administrative machinery, clothed to a certain extent (but not too much) in liberal forms."²⁶ Nevertheless, the fundamental laws which he framed became the groundwork of the empire, and remained in force in the western half until the revolution of 1918. By this achievement, Schmerling earned the title of "Father of the Constitution."

The "February patent" of 1861 created an enlarged *Reichsrat*, divided into a house of peers and a house of deputies, and endowed with important new powers, such as the control of the national debt and the voting of the budget. On the whole, a compromise was reached between the centralized *Einheitsstaat* and provincial autonomy, between parliamentary government and autocracy, whereby Schmerling hoped to conciliate all classes and nationalities. That the bulk of authority remained with the Crown, that the preponderant influence rested with the bureaucracy and the army, that the Germans

²⁵ A. von Arneth: *Anton Ritter von Schmerling, Episoden aus seinem Leben* (Vienna 1895).

²⁶ Redlich I, part I, p. 696. — For Schmerling's character and policies, see also F. Uhl: "Schmerling und die Seinen," in *Neue Freie Presse*, July 5, 1903, reprinted in Uhl's *Aus Meinem Leben* (Vienna 1908) pp. 160-186; J. Redlich: "Lasser und Schmerling, nach ihren Briefen," in *Oesterreichische Rundschau* XIX, 1909, pp. 79-93; and the article on Schmerling, by Franz Ilwof, in *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie* LIV, pp. 56-72.

were more favored than the Hungarians, Slavs, or Italians: these were the objectives of the Kaiser and the *Staatsminister*.²⁷

Franz Joseph's attitude toward the February constitution was stated in unmistakeable terms to his ministers in council shortly after its promulgation. "The patent of February 26, said His Majesty, represents the utmost limitation to which the imperial authority may be subjected. Therefore, in order that His Majesty might look into the future with confidence, he demanded of all his ministers the solemn promise, that they would bend their concentrated efforts to protect the throne against the extortion of further concessions by pressure from the *Reichsrat* or the *Landtage*, or by revolutionary attempts of the masses. . . . He then asked the ministers to put their signatures under the foregoing declarations, as a solemn promise of each and every one to grant His Majesty, under all circumstances, the effective protection and cooperation, which he now claimed." Every minister signed.²⁸

Fortunately this strange baptism of the newborn constitution remained a secret of the *Hofburg*. The people of Vienna and the majority of German-Austrians accepted the "gracious gift" with real enthusiasm, as the visible symbol of a change of policy in the government. But Deák remained intransigent: not a single Hungarian took a seat in the new *Reichsrat*. Undaunted, Schmerling hurled at them his famous phrase, "Wir können warten," and the house of deputies, maimed at birth, began its wordy debates in the "Schmerling Theater."²⁹ As a French observer wittily remarked, "C'était un régime parlementaire sans Parlement, centraliste sans centre, représentatif sans représentation."³⁰

The staggering task of rescuing the finances had been under-

²⁷ See Redlich's summary, vol I, part I, pp 808-814.

²⁸ Redlich I, part I, p. 808 (Protocol of the council of February 28, 1861).

²⁹ Humorous nickname for the temporary wooden structure erected for the House of Deputies, at the *Schottentor* in Vienna.

³⁰ A. Memor: *L'Allemagne nouvelle* p 168.

taken with energy by the resourceful minister von Plener.⁸¹ But in spite of rigorous economy in several departments, his budgets showed huge deficits, due partly to the Emperor's desire to maintain a large army, partly to the reluctance of the land-magnates to bear their share of taxation. By 1864, however, the finance minister had the satisfaction of seeing the 94 million deficit reduced to 45 million florins. If the state could be kept out of war for five years, the chance of recovery was excellent.

While the financial problem was thus nearing a solution, the problem of Hungary remained as complex as ever. Backed by a large majority in the *Reichsrat* and by the entire cabinet, Schmerling tried his favorite tactics on the recalcitrant nation. He refused to negotiate with Deák. He dissolved the Hungarian *Landtag* to silence that leader's eloquence. He placed the land again under the old Bach system of severe press control, forcible recruiting and tax-collecting, and an administration manned with an army of German-speaking officials. By the close of the session in February 1864, however, the speech from the throne could register no change in the situation.

How long the deadlock would continue, no one could tell, but the chance of victory lay with Deák rather than with Schmerling. The Hungarian leader now had an entire nation behind him: the *Staatsminister*, on the other hand, had lost some of his popular support, and worse still, his influence with the Emperor. In no small degree, the decline of Schmerling's prestige was the result of failures in foreign policy, especially the heroic fiasco of the Austrian plans for the reform of the German Confederation.

THE FÜRSTENTAG, AND THE SCHLESWIG-HOLSTEIN CRISIS

The national spirit, suppressed so long under the Bach regime, had surged up again in 1859 as a result of the war

⁸¹ See detailed narrative of these negotiations in *Bettelheim's Biographisches Jahrbuch* XVI, p. 262 ff., "Ignaz von Plener," by his son.

against France and Italy.³² In the next years, as in 1848-1850, the two opposing ideals of a smaller union and a larger federal state were dragged into the political arena, this time as the battle-cries of two nation-wide associations formed to propagate them; the *National-Verein* and the *Reform-Verein*.³³ The air was filled with elaborate reform plans offered by princes, professors, premiers, and other public men.³⁴ In December 1861, Count Bernstorff, the new minister of foreign affairs in Berlin, came out clearly for the union-policy of 1850: a federal state under Prussia, in alliance with Austria.³⁵ The joy of the Small-Germans was unbounded. But angry protests from Austria and the chorus of minor states raised visions of a second *Olmütz*. Bernstorff lacked the courage and the will to carry the plan by force, and it was practically, if not theoretically, abandoned. For the second time, Prussia failed to secure reform by peaceful means.

The revenge which Bernstorff took upon Austria only made

³² For the following, see in general, Sybel II, pp. 243-259, 290-307, 315-328, 337-341, 395-412; Zechlin pp. 213-225, 260-275, 368-411, 571-583, 600-602; Hengelmüller in *Deutsche Revue* XXXVIII, 1913, Heft 3, p. 161 ff., 299 ff.; Heft, p. 35 ff.; XXXIX, 1914, Heft 3, p. 33 ff.; Stern VIII, chapter x *passim*; IX, chapter vi *passim*; Brandenburg I, pp. 404-420; Wilhelm Mommsen: "Zur Beurteilung der deutschen Einheitsbewegung," in *Historische Zeitschrift* CXXXVIII, 1928, Heft 3, pp. 523-543. Valuable selections from contemporary publicist literature are given in Adolf Rapp: *Grossdeutsch-Kleindeutsch* pp. 159-233.

³³ For the former, see especially Rudolf Schwab: *Der Nationalverein, seine Entstehung und sein Wirken* (Berlin 1902), and Hermann Oncken: *Rudolf von Benningsen*, volume I (Stuttgart 1910). For the latter, see the dissertation of Erich Zimmermann: *Der Deutsche Reformverein* (Heidelberg 1929), using the Lerchenfeld papers.

³⁴ For recent detailed studies of some of these, see Martin Daerr: *Beust und die Bundesreformpläne der deutschen Mittelstaaten im Jahre 1859* (Dresden 1931); H. H. Thumann: "Beusts Plan zur Reform des deutschen Bundes vom 15. Oktober 1861," in *Neues Archiv für sächsische Geschichte* XLVI, 1925, pp. 46-77; the first half of Hans Scheller's able study, *Der Frankfurter Fürstentag 1863* (Leipzig 1929). These three monographs are based on the Saxon archives. Extensive use of the vast printed material is shown in Clara Börner's Marburg dissertation (1919): *Julius Fröbel und das oesterreichische Bundesreformprojekt aus dem Jahre 1863*.

³⁵ See Karl Ringhoff: *The Bernstorff Papers* II, pp. 84-179.

relations worse. William's recognition of the new kingdom of Italy seemed to Franz Joseph not only a betrayal of monarchical principles but a direct menace to Austria. And Prussia's negotiations with France for a most-favored-nation commercial treaty threatened the special position toward the *Zollverein* which Austria felt was hers. The *Ballplatz* rose to the occasion. It offered to open to German merchants the great territory of the empire almost without restriction, if the German states would reject the Prusso-French treaty. Austria was ready heroically to sacrifice economics for the political advantage of preserving a close bond with Germany. But Prussia signed the French treaty and gave the lesser states three years to follow suit or lose their membership in the *Zollverein*. Thus the issue was joined in the commercial field.³⁶

Bernstorff's vigorous economico-political policy was continued by his successor.³⁷ In October 1862, Vienna saw with dismay its arch-opponent, Bismarck, become minister-president in Berlin. A few weeks later, his famous advice to Karolyi descended upon the *Ballplatz* like a thunderbolt: Austria should move her center of gravity to Budapest; if she wished Prussia's friendship she must leave Prussia free in North Germany and cease playing off the smaller states against her; unless she did that, Prussia would seek "other friends."³⁸ Such words only stirred up indignation in Vienna, though the Emperor and Count Rechberg strove to pour oil on the troubled waters.³⁹

Meanwhile, the Small-Germany party began to lose hope in Prussian leadership. Their disappointment increased as they

³⁶ See the contemporary literature cited by Zechlin p. 370 note 2.

³⁷ At this point begins the important collection of documents on Bismarck's diplomacy, edited by Friedrich Thimme. volume IV of *Bismarck, die gesammelten Werke* (henceforth cited as *G.W.* IV); and the far more complete and valuable collection from all the important archives of Europe, edited by Rudolf Ibbeken: volume III of *Die auswärtige Politik Preussens 1858-1871*.

³⁸ *G. W.* VII, pp. 69-72.

³⁹ Franz Joseph's conversation with the Prussian Crown Prince, December 17, 1862 (*Kaiser Friedrich III, Tagebücher von 1848-1866* pp. 507-510), and the mission of Count Thun to Berlin (*Stern* IX, p. 294).

saw the "new era" fade into a bitter campaign against the Liberals in the Prussian parliament conducted by Bismarck, who rode roughshod over their constitutional privileges. In contrast, the new parliamentary regime in Vienna shone with brighter lustre. Moreover, the Schmerling government was turning from words to deeds, in the hope of drawing many of Prussia's downcast adherents into the Great-Germany camp. Austria had introduced a motion in the Diet calling for a semi-popular all-German assembly of delegates to be appointed by the individual parliaments, to unify legal procedure and set up a federal supreme court,—favorite ideas of Schmerling. An energetic propaganda was launched in the press both within and beyond the borders of Austria. The newly-founded *Reform-Verein* strove to popularize a Great-Germany in which Austria would retain her "historic preëminence." While Prussia neglected the popular movement, Austria was capitalizing it.

In the following summer (1863), the situation seemed ripe for a bold stroke.⁴⁰ Encouraged by Schmerling and Biegeleben, with whom he prepared the plans behind the back of Count Rechberg, the Kaiser summoned the German sovereigns to a congress in Frankfurt-am-Main. In his pocket, Franz Joseph had a scheme for the reconstruction of the Confederation. An assembly of delegates from the various parliaments was meant to satisfy the popular wishes. The rest was calculated to make a stronger, more efficient Germany. But the main object was to secure more firmly than ever those two aims of Schwarzenberg and his successors: to strengthen Austria's primacy and power in the Confederation; and to bring all her possessions under the protection of the entire *Bund*.

⁴⁰ For the *Fürstentag*, see the studies of Scheller and Börner previously cited, and those of Max Lenz: "Die Begegnung König Wilhelms mit dem Kaiser Franz Joseph in Gastein am 3. August 1863," in the *Brandenburg Festschrift, Staat und Persönlichkeit* (Leipzig 1928) pp. 169-213; and "König Wilhelm und Bismarck in ihrer Stellung zum Frankfurter Fürstentag," in *Sitzungsberichte der preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften*, phil.-hist. Klasse, 1929, Heft 7, pp. 162-175. These works make use of and supersede all previous studies. Lenz uses also the Prussian and Austrian archives.

The only way to obtain William's signature to such a perpetuation of Austrian hegemony was through force as in 1850, or by astute diplomacy. Franz Joseph tried the latter by a manoeuvre quite in the spirit of Schwarzenberg, and all but succeeded. His plan was foiled by Bismarck, however, who kept his king away from Frankfurt, and thus reduced the *Fürstentag* to a mere rump. More than ever, William now was convinced that "there was a pre-determination on the part of Austria to ruin Prussia. . . . Her conduct had been most false," he repeated to Queen Victoria.⁴¹ For a moment Bismarck had visions of "the war for the hegemony of Germany." But his hints to Russia for military aid fell on deaf ears in Petersburg,⁴²—and the *Wilhelmstrasse* vented its anger in a diplomatic note to Vienna.

For Austria, there remained only one path still open. Rechberg proposed that the reform-plan be carried into effect without Prussia. But the minor states would not go so far, and the conferences at Nürnberg, whither their premiers had been summoned for this purpose, broke up without the desired result.⁴³ The Bavarian minister had already given expression to the prevailing attitude when he said: "We want no federation without Austria, but also no federation without Prussia." Thus the most elaborate efforts in behalf of federal reform, since 1850, had ended in a complete fiasco. It was the last attempt at unification on the basis of a Great-Germany, and without the employment of military force.

The *Fürstentag* and its sequel brought the issues between the two rival powers to the forefront of European politics.⁴⁴ In the first place, the assembled princes had been willing to grant to Austria the perpetual headship of the Confederation,

⁴¹ *The Letters of Queen Victoria*, second series, I, pp. 106-107.

⁴² For Bismarck's overtures to Russia at this time, see R. H. Lord: "Bismarck and Russia in 1863," in *American Historical Review* XXIX, 1923, pp. 24-48; *Die auswärtige Politik Preussens 1858-1871*, III, pp. 786-793, 807-808.

⁴³ The only detailed study of the Nürnberg conference is in Scheller pp 133-146.

⁴⁴ See G. W. IV, Nos. 128 and 136, and editor's prefatory notes to both.

—but Prussia demanded “complete equality . . . in the presidency and the direction of federal affairs.” In the second place, Austria had secured the approval of the congress for the protection of her non-German lands by a two-thirds vote of the Diet,—but Prussia now insisted upon an absolute veto against such a decision. In the third place, Prussia now tried to outbid Austria in popular favor by proposing a parliament elected directly by universal manhood suffrage, with wider powers than that planned by Schmerling.⁴⁵ A fourth issue was the commercial struggle.

Alongside these public issues stood the so-called “*Mainlinie*” problem: Prussia wished to exercise more direct influence upon the states north of the river Main. To be sure, she was willing that Austria do the same in South Germany. But Austria was as little friendly to this type of dualism as she was to the open dualism in the Diet. Even those Austrians who were inclined to grant a greater influence to Prussia in the north, were forced to admit that Austria’s task in subordinating states like Bavaria and Baden would be more difficult than Prussia’s in Hanover and Hesse. Franz Joseph himself had not officially countenanced the military convention by which Prussia controlled the army of Coburg; as in the time of Schwarzenberg and Buol, the Kaiser considered himself the protector of the smaller states, both north and south of the Main, against Prussian encroachments; he could not imagine himself in any other role than that of the dominant power in all Germany.⁴⁶

In November 1863, therefore, the gulf between the Prussian and Austrian governments, and between the Small-Germany and Great-Germany parties, seemed wider and deeper than ever. Yet during this month there occurred a sudden change of front in the Austrian foreign office. At Nürnberg, Count Rechberg had parted from the Saxon minister with the words: “Very well, if you wish it that way, we too can make

⁴⁵ For Bismarck’s motives, see Erich Brandenburg: *Untersuchungen und Aktenstücke zur Geschichte der Reichsgründung* pp. 501-503.

⁴⁶ Cf. his words to Queen Victoria in September 1863 (*The Letters of Queen Victoria*, second series, I, p. 109).

friends with Prussia."⁴⁷ Returning to Vienna he bethought himself of Bismarck's alliance offer of 1862.⁴⁸ Not unaware of Bismarck's ultimate aim to contest Austrian supremacy by the sword if necessary, Rechberg nevertheless thought that by conceding to Prussia somewhat more influence in German affairs, and by handling her tactfully, the conflict could be postponed until Austria had recovered her strength.⁴⁹ He saw in the "conflict ministry" a strong ally against the rising democratic tide in Germany. Many of the minor German governments were bending like reeds before the flood; and Rechberg was at one with Bismarck in minimizing the real power of all these petty sovereigns. Through Count Karolyi, Rechberg began to sound Bismarck concerning a *rapprochement*, and found that minister and court circles not disinclined toward better relations, provided Austria would take the initiative in restoring them.⁵⁰ Disheartened by the failure of Schmerling's and Biegeleben's policies at the futile *Fürstentag*, Franz Joseph was ready to follow the advice of his foreign minister.

If Austria's change of front was motivated by pique and anger at the *Mittelstaaten*, the new entente was cemented by far more imperious motive-forces. By pursuing a half-and-half policy during the Polish affair, the Danube state had awakened old enmity both in Russia and in France. Without a friend on the continent, Austria feared to reject or to accept the invitation which Napoleon III issued on November 4 to a congress at Paris to remake the map of Europe. Acceptance might mean dismemberment, rejection might mean war. But

⁴⁷ Beust: *Aus drei Vierteljahrhundertern* I, p. 336.

⁴⁸ In the interview of December 4, 1862 with Count Karolyi, Bismarck had said: "... If you are willing to take a direction similar to that of Metternich's policy, you will find us ready to conclude a hard and fast alliance with you ... and you won't find any other Prussian statesmen so indifferent to public opinion and so willing to follow a genuine cabinet policy ... as I." (Hengelmüller, *loc. cit.*, Heft 4, p. 38; reprinted in *G. W.* VII, pp. 69-72).

⁴⁹ Friedjung: *Kampf* II, p. 389.

⁵⁰ For this change in Austrian policy, see Hengelmüller's article on Karolyi in *Deutsche Revue* XXXIX, 1914, Heft 3, pp. 224-227; and Lawrence D. Steefel: *The Schleswig-Holstein Question* pp. 95-98.

the "no" of Austria and Prussia combined would carry convincing weight, and since Prussia was likewise threatened, her cooperation was attainable.

At the same time, the two powers were drawn into parallel tracks by a quarrel between the German Confederation and Denmark, which became acute in mid-November.⁵¹ The death of Frederick VII, King of Denmark and Duke of Schleswig-Holstein, at this moment precipitated a revival of the old dispute as to who was his rightful successor in the Elbe Duchies. As signers of the London protocol of 1852, which had established the right of Christian of Glucksburg, Austria and Prussia found themselves in harmony with the European powers but at odds with the German states—the majority in the Diet—which supported the claims of Frederick of Augustenburg, whose German nationality and democratic principles made him popular with the masses. Franz Joseph and William disliked the Prince's "radical" advisers and his adoption of the democratic constitution of 1848 for the Duchies. In spite of this, however, William's sympathies were with Frederick.

A few days later, Christian IX, crowned King and Duke, promulgated a reactionary constitution for the Duchy of Schleswig and Holstein and bound the former, largely inhabited by Germans, more closely to the Danish monarchy proper. Coming as the culmination of long dissensions between the government and the German-speaking population, this act called forth an outburst of national feeling throughout Germany, which compelled the Frankfurt Diet to vote a punitive expedition against Denmark. While the two German powers were thus preparing to force the Danes to live up to their earlier promises,⁵² they ran the risk of antagonizing the other

⁵¹ For the Schleswig-Holstein question and the crisis of November, in addition to the older literature, see Johannes Gebauer: *Herzog Friedrich VIII von Schleswig-Holstein*; and especially Steefel's detailed monograph, with its extensive bibliography and valuable appendices of documents.

⁵² In 1851 and 1852, the Danish government had undertaken to respect the rights and privileges of the German-speaking inhabitants, who constituted the entire population of Holstein and about two-thirds of Schleswig. See the text of these "agreements" in Steefel pp. 265-273.

European powers, which had guaranteed the integrity of the little northern state by the same London protocol. Only by combined action could Rechberg and Bismarck hold in check the too ardent German states and face the non-German powers at the same time. Both sovereigns were therefore glad to find common ground on the eve of an enterprise which might evoke a European war. At least for the time being, the new *entente* rescued Austria from the isolation into which she had strayed since Schwarzenberg's death. For better or for worse, Rechberg was guiding her back into the time-honored policy of alliances.⁵³

FRANZ JOSEPH AND HIS ENTOURAGE

For more reasons than those of foreign policy the Prussian *entente* was agreeable to Franz Joseph. Prussia was a German state, and the Kaiser felt himself a German.⁵⁴ It was a closer bond with a sovereign who clung to conservative monarchical principles, and who was willing to cooperate actively in checking the onrush of democratic ideas. In Franz Joseph's eyes, the Danish war which followed was a crusade for the preservation of the sanctity of treaties and the maintenance of the existing order in Europe, matters of life and death to the Habsburg power. He was not blind to the fact that Bismarck might later tempt his sovereign to derive more tangible profits from the "crusade." But he took Bismarck's usual bluster with a grain of salt, he counted upon the loyalty of King William to the common cause, and was confident that in the last analysis Austria could check the ambitions of her rival.⁵⁵

To discover the deeper motives behind Franz Joseph's system of foreign policy, one must examine the mainsprings of his character, and the influences which moulded this young

⁵³ See the brilliant passage in Friedjung: *Kampf* I, pp. 7-10.

⁵⁴ "Ich bin vor allem Oesterreicher, aber entschieden deutsch, und wünsche den innigsten Anschluss Oesterreichs an Deutschland," Franz Joseph had declared in 1862. (Charmatz: *Oesterreichs Innere Geschichte* I, p. 53).

⁵⁵ These ideas are expressed in a rare letter to his cousin and intimate friend, Crown Prince Albert of Saxony, February 16, 1864 (Otto Ernst: *Franz Joseph I. in seinen Briefen* pp. 159-160).

Habsburg. Only since his death has a full-length portrait been successfully attempted. Several of his eminent subjects have at last portrayed their monarch with complete objectivity, one with all the detail of a Van Eyck, others with the broad strokes of a Sargent.⁵⁶

The handsome youth with the serious mien who had been called to the throne in the turmoil of 1848 was now, in 1863, a man of thirty-three years, of moderate height and build, appearing older by reason of large side-burn whiskers and a very dignified bearing.⁵⁷ By nature free from gusts of anger or enthusiasm, the personification of self-control and correctness and duty, formally gracious in public and private intercourse, but totally lacking in *bonhomie*, he did not appear to his subjects a typical Habsburg Emperor.

Intellectually he was not gifted above the average. He possessed, it is true, quick perception and an excellent memory for details. He displayed at Villafranca and the *Fürstentag*

⁵⁶ Heinrich Friedjung: "Kaiser Franz Joseph I. Ein Charakterbild," in *Historische Aufsätze* pp. 493-538; Joseph Redlich: *Emperor Francis Joseph of Austria*; Heinrich Ritter von Srbik: "Franz Joseph I. Charakter und Regierungsgrundsätze," in *Historische Zeitschrift* CXLIV, 1931, Heft 3, pp. 509-526, the best interpretation of the Emperor's political concepts. There are short character sketches of merit by Oswald Redlich (*Neue oesterreichische Biographie* I, 1923, pp. 11-22, reprinted in his *Ausgewählte Schriften* [Vienna 1928] pp. 53-71), by Theodor von Sossnosky (*Fortnightly Review* CXIV, 1920, pp. 78-91, and *Deutsches Biographisches Jahrbuch* I, 1925, pp. 208-219), by Hermann Bahr (*Preussische Jahrbücher* CLXXXIII, 1921, pp. 145-153), by Paul Herre (*Berliner Monatshefte* VIII, 1930, pp. 820-823), by Emmanuel Urbas (*Preussische Jahrbücher* CCXXI, 1930, Heft 3, pp. 113-115 and 268-272), and by R. W. Seton-Watson (*History* XVII, 1932, pp. 111-121). Of the countless pre-war biographical sketches, that by August Fournier in the *Deutsche Rundschau* (XCVII, 1898, pp. 350-369) is the most objective. More valuable for its extensive lists of books and articles about Franz Joseph than as a character study is the sketch by Berthold Bretholz in the *Zeitschrift des deutschen Vereins für die Geschichte Mährens und Schlesiens*, Jahrgang XXI, 1917, Heft 1, pp. 1-22.

⁵⁷ For photographs of Franz Joseph at all ages, see Ch. Scolik and A. Unger: *Kaiser Franz Josef I. Zyklus von seltenen Bildern aus den ersten Kinderjahren bis in die Gegenwart* (Vienna 1908); Richard Charnatz: *Kaiser Franz Joseph I. (Volksbücher der Geschichte*, No. 135, Leipzig 1917); Max Herzog: *Das Buch vom Kaiser* (Vienna? 1898).

unusual capacity for the discussion of political questions. But he had no originality and no imagination. Singularly un-Austrian in the matter-of-factness of his personality and the colorlessness of his utterances, he resembled his charming Viennese subjects only in a tendency to postpone difficult decisions until forced by circumstances to act. He had little aesthetic appreciation, except for natural scenery, and "had probably read no book since his accession."⁵⁸ In the words of a high Austrian noble, "The Emperor is a conscientious man, but he is drowned in the mass of routine business."⁵⁹ Another observer called him "the busiest official in all Austria."⁶⁰ But arising at five o'clock in the morning and working ten hours at a desk do not of themselves bestow the ability to conceive a broad policy, to fit it to the realities of a situation, and to carry it through to its logical conclusion. Franz Joseph did not understand the new political forces at work in the Europe of the 'sixties, and in no sense was he a moral leader of his peoples. Like his grandfather, Franz II, he would have made an efficient departmental undersecretary, but he was endowed with none of the genius of the statesman.

And yet the realm he was called upon to rule presented more complex problems than any other European state. From the German nucleus of the East mark, his Habsburg ancestors had expanded their territory in a region containing more different peoples than any other part of Europe except the Balkans, where Turkey had erected an equally heterogeneous empire. Such conglomerates were too unwieldy to be welded into the strong unity of a national state, to be fired by a single idea, by the word of the ruler. The Emperor of Austria, it has been truly said, could not lead his peoples, he could only steer

⁵⁸ Remark of the minister of education, Count Leo Thun (E. L. von Gerlach: *Aufzeichnungen aus seinem Leben und Wirken* II, p. 298).

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

⁶⁰ *Denkwürdigkeiten des Botschafters General von Schweinitz* I, p. 114. Mörner called him "the most conscientious employé in the Empire" (*Memoirs and Letters* II, p. 73).

them.⁶¹ With the example of disintegrating Turkey on their doorstep, and with fresh memories of 1848-50, the Habsburgs envisaged what might be their own fate, unless they took an aggressive stand on behalf of the existing order. In 1859, they went to war to uphold the rights of treaties, but their defeat at the hands of modern nationalism did not convince them of the need to compromise with that powerful force.

The traditional Habsburg principles had been implanted in the young Franz Joseph by his mother and by the old chancellor Metternich.⁶² They were supplemented by the conservative Catholic teachings of Abbot Rauscher, to whom he owed his small literary and philosophical education.⁶³ The compelling example of Schwarzenberg, and the absence of any contact with circles which held other ideals, confirmed Franz Joseph in his belief in their soundness. "The Empire," said the leading Austrian minister in 1865, "has always been governed upon the sole basis of the principle of legitimacy. It would be a very great blot on its history if this principle should ever be departed from. Supported by the traditions of his House, the Emperor has never abandoned it, and never will abandon it, unless constrained by superior force. In regard to Italy, it is all the more necessary for him to stand firmly by his ancestral traditions, for a departure from them would bring direct injury to members of the Imperial Family. . . . The motive of his acts is not hatred, but political conviction, and the vindication of the honor of his name. . . ."⁶⁴

The honor and prestige of the Habsburg name still remained high in 1864. In its own eyes, and in the eyes of the other

⁶¹ H. Orges: "Das Heer in Oesterreich," in *Oesterreichische Revue* III, 1865, p. 36.

⁶² Cf. Srbik, *loc. cit.* p. 519.

⁶³ Rauscher's strictly conservative ideals of the Holy Roman Emperorship and the sacredness of the existing order are shown in his biography by Cölestin Wolfsgruber: *Joseph Othmar Cardinal Rauscher, Fürsterzbischof von Wien*, especially p. 529.

⁶⁴ Words of Count Belcredi to Conte Malaguzzi, October 25, 1865 (Luzio; *Francesco Giuseppe e l'Italia* pp. 26-27). See Franz Joseph's own words on legitimacy, in council of October 31 (Appendix A, No. 3).

European monarchs, the Austrian dynasty was the most exalted of all. The scion of a line which had worn an imperial crown for almost five hundred years, exercised consciously or unconsciously a certain spell over the minor German sovereigns, and at times over the Hohenzollerns as well. And this was not lessened by the strict etiquette, the exclusiveness, and the Spanish ceremonial observed at the Court of "His Imperial Royal Apostolic Majesty" of Austria, Hungary, Bohemia, and a dozen other lands. Even greater was the prestige of power and success, of an army among the first in Europe, whose reputation, if dimmed in 1859, was brightened on the battlefields of Jutland.

In the character of Franz Joseph, dynastic feeling and military interests strove for first place.⁶⁵ Each political act was dominated by the thought: would it raise or lower the prestige of my House? This forbade him to enter compromises, which expediency dictated, and forced him to sacrifice the good of the realm for the good of the dynasty, where the two conflicted.⁶⁶ We have seen how tenaciously he clung to the position of primacy in the Confederation. He considered his *Reich* as a private estate, of which he was still the master in spite of the restrictions of the February patent.⁶⁷ Yet above and beyond the attitude of possession, he felt a strong sense of duty in the management of his realm.⁶⁸ He carried over the military attitude into the civil government; he expected his ministers to execute his orders; and he resented their attempts to resign when they differed from him on a matter of policy. "It isn't his fault that he is born corporal," said the Empress Elizabeth to a friend.⁶⁹

⁶⁵ This is preëminently Redlich's thesis. Srbik criticises it: *loc. cit.* pp. 516-517.

⁶⁶ A notable example of this was the sacrifice of General Benedek in 1866 (Friedjung: *Kampf* II, pp. 560-565; Redlich: *Emperor Francis Joseph* p. 324).

⁶⁷ *Briefe Kaiser Franz Josephs an seine Mutter* p. 302; Redlich: *Das oesterreichische Staats- und Reichsproblem* II, p. 374; Urbas, *loc. cit.*, pp. 115, 268.

⁶⁸ Ritter von Srbik, *loc. cit.*, p. 517.

⁶⁹ Hermann Bahr, *loc. cit.*, p. 145.

Upon this young monarch who held the reins jealously in his own hand, certain persons had more influence than his ministers, if we except Schwarzenberg and Esterhazy. The chief of his military cabinet in the '50s, Count Grünne, confirmed the youth in his tendency to treat his monarchical office as essentially a military command. Grünne's successor in the following decade, Count Crenneville, clerically-minded, loved and respected in Vienna, yet narrowly militarist, encouraged the Emperor's prejudices against everything new, whether in statecraft or in the equipment of the army.⁷⁰ Much the same was the potent influence of the Archduke Albrecht, Franz Joseph's cousin, ten years his senior, and "an authoritarian by disposition."⁷¹ And the strong-minded Archduchess Sophie, who had secured the throne for her son in 1848, and who still held the position of social leadership at court, doubtless maintained a certain influence in the unofficial councils of her dutiful "Franzi."⁷² Though not at heart an ultramontane, Franz Joseph was led into an ultramontane policy by these and a few other intimates, who formed a sort of *camarilla* in the *Hofburg*.⁷³ Bitter enemies of the new Italy, they pressed the

⁷⁰ Franz Folliot von Crenneville, lieutenant field marshal and first adjutant general. A popular phrase ran thus: Formerly the *mot d'ordre* was "*Grünne will*," now it is Crenneville!

⁷¹ Redlich: *Francis Joseph* p. 200. Duncker's life of the Archduke is a bald chronicle, of no interest for diplomacy.

⁷² In his younger days, Franz Joseph spoke of his mother in a different tone from that used toward others. He would write "Mama befiehlt es" or "Auf Mama's Befehl," etc. (Otto Ernst: *Franz Joseph I. in seinen Briefen* pp. 137-139). However, his letters to his mother betray much less political influence on the Archduchess' part, after 1852, than has previously been supposed (*Briefe Kaiser Franz Josephs I. an seine Mutter, 1838-1872* pp. 7-8 and p. 158 ff.). But she still put in her word at crucial moments (*Ibid.* pp. 8, 341, 342; Friedjung: *Oesterreich von 1848 bis 1860*, vol. II, p. 259).

⁷³ With so few private letters at our disposal it is difficult to measure the influence of Cardinal Rauscher, Count Grünne (who retained a position close to Franz Joseph), the Empress Elizabeth, the Prince of Thurn and Taxis (connected with the Habsburgs and the Esterhazys), the liberal Archduke Rainer, and others. Complete reliance cannot be placed on the hints in Julius Fröbel: *Ein Lebenslauf* II, p. 378 and Alessandro Luzio: "La Missione Malaguzzi a Vienna nel 1865-66," in *Risorgimento Italiano* XV, 1922, pp. 422-426, though they appear to have some foundation.

Kaiser continually to restore the exiled rulers and to preserve the temporal power of the Pope against the encroachment of Victor Emanuel.⁷⁴

The Emperor's Prussian policy also reflected the predilections of his court and his general staff, predilections shared by Count Rechberg. Their attitude differed from the extreme anti-Prussianism of Biegeleben in two ways: they thought better of King William, and they saw good as well as evil tendencies in Bismarck. Their *bête noir* was the Prussian Liberal party, which not only aimed to drive Austria from Germany, but also strove to reduce the power of the Crown in Prussia, and sympathized with democratic parties in Austria and all German states. The fear that the King would have to call a Liberal ministry if Bismarck fell, stayed the hand of the Austrian court from attempting an intrigue against Bismarck, but they always kept the possibility of overthrowing him as a last resort.⁷⁵ The King himself was the rock on which they based their hopes for a secure *entente* with Prussia.⁷⁶ Franz Joseph and his *entourage* still felt confident that William would never again leave him in the lurch

⁷⁴ Cf. the words of Count Blome, Austria's zealous envoy in Munich: "Italien und speciell Rom gegenüber ist unser Weg dermassen durch Tradition, Prinzipien, Gefühle, und Interessen vorgezeichnet, dass wir ihn nicht verlassen können, ohne uns gänzlich zu verderben." (Letter to Count Mensdorff October 29, 1864).

⁷⁵ Cf. Blome to Mensdorff, August 14, 1865, No. 2 (Appendix A, No. 9); Rechberg's words to Friedjung (*Kampf* II, p. 589); and the Coburg mediation attempt in 1866 (See below, chapter x).

⁷⁶ Karolyi wrote from Berlin in 1860: "Abgesehen von seinen [William's] loyalen Instinkten und Gesinnungen kommt indirekt seine Unentschlossenheit der Erhaltung der deutschen Föderativverhältnisse zugute. . . Daher befürchte ich nicht, solange der Regent, ein durch und durch edler Fürst, die Geschicke Preussens leitet, ein positives Verlassen der rechtlichen Grundlagen des deutschen Bundesverhältnisses, noch viel weniger das Eingehen in eine Tripelallianz— Frankreich, Russland, Preussen. . ." (Hengelmüller, in *Deutsche Revue* XXXVIII, 1913, Heft 2, p. 278). See also Franz Joseph's words to Queen Victoria, September 1863 (*Letters of Queen Victoria*, second series, I, pp. 107-108). Rechberg said, in council of October 13, 1864: "Trotz den persönlich wohlwollenden Gesinnungen des Königs von Preussen, ist nur das preussische Kabinet stets feindselig. . ." (Protocol, HHS). A similar remark in *Briefe Kaiser Franz Josephs I. an seine Mutter* p. 302.

against Napoleon.⁷⁷ They knew of William's desire for parity, but they thought he would consider a war to attain it "*Verrat am Vaterland*."

As for Bismarck, he put the Austrian court in the greatest embarrassment, for they approved his internal policy and monarchical principles just as warmly as they condemned his aggressive demands on Austria. The Archduchess Sophie declared that she would like to cut Bismarck in two, so that she could admire one half and hate the other.⁷⁸ Bismarck's bold self-assurance impressed Franz Joseph favorably, — too favorably to suit the counsellors of the *Ballplatz*.⁷⁹ That he was an extremely able man, all had to admit. Biegeleben's fear was as clear an evidence of this as Rechberg's dispassionate estimate that "if Bismarck had a well-rounded diplomatic training, he would be one of the first among German statesmen, if not the first."⁸⁰ As it was, however, even Rechberg saw in the Prussian minister-president primarily a party-man, blessed with more than his proper share of good luck.⁸¹ The Austrians consoled themselves, too, with the thought that Bismarck's bluster was exaggerated,⁸² — it was characteristically Prussian to "stuff one's mouth very full."⁸³ Yet they felt

⁷⁷ Cf. Franz Joseph's words to King John of Saxony, after the Teplitz meeting in 1860 (Sybel II, p. 271). A letter from William to Franz Joseph, July 14, 1859, closed with an expression of hope, "dass Oesterreich und Preussen dem gemeinsamen Feind das nächstmal einig gegenübertreten würden." (Engel-Janosi: *Rechberg* p. 58). In 1863, in a letter to Leopold of Belgium to be shown to Franz Joseph, William proposed that Prussia and Austria should "unite for . . . the defense of Germany against the common enemy, France" (*Letters of Queen Victoria*, second series, I, p. 106).

⁷⁸ Gerlach II, p. 288.

⁷⁹ Ernst Vogt: *Die hessische Politik in der Zeit der Reichsgründung* p. 44 note 2.

⁸⁰ In 1862 (Friedjung: *Kampf* I, p. 46).

⁸¹ *Ibid.* Blome wrote in 1865: Bismarck is not a statesman, but a party-man (Appendix A, No. 9). In 1892, Rechberg still was convinced that Bismarck had been very lucky ("Ein Gespräch mit dem Grafen Rechberg," in *Neue Freie Presse*, March 3, 1899, No. 12403).

⁸² Franz Joseph to Albert of Saxony, February 16, 1864 (Ernst p. 160).

⁸³ Mensdorff's expression, in council of January 11, 1865 (Appendix A, No. 4).

more comfortable in having this fire-brand with them than against them. By the alliance, Franz Joseph expected to utilize Bismarck's strength for the conservative cause, and at the same time neutralize his anti-federal, anti-Austrian tendencies.⁸⁴

How true or how false were these Austrian estimates of Bismarck and his royal master? Undoubtedly William still considered a war with Austria unthinkable, and Bismarck dared not let the King see that such an extreme measure was in his program.⁸⁵ Yet the Vienna court circles did overestimate William's good-will. They thought him of similar calibre to his brother the late King, sensitive to family influences and to the brilliance of the Habsburg tradition.⁸⁶ In reality William had a constant feeling, which came to the surface only in an occasional indignant outburst, that Austria was unfairly holding Prussia down.⁸⁷ His heart was in his army, and Austria's refusal to give him the command of the northern federal forces touched him to the quick. Bismarck knew his sovereign's tender spots, and intended that Austria should rub them to the raw. Once the King was sufficiently angered, he could be persuaded to make such demands upon his ally as Bismarck wished. Well aware of Bismarck's objectives, his courage and his resourcefulness, the Austrian court simply did not credit him with the ability to overcome all the obstacles they could place in his path, and to drag the King into an adventurous policy against his ally.⁸⁸

⁸⁴ Cf. Metternich's remark to Vitzthum von Eckstädt: *London, Gastein, und Sadowa* p. 67.

⁸⁵ See below, chapter xli.

⁸⁶ *Gedanken und Erinnerungen von Otto Fürst von Bismarck* I, p. 365.

⁸⁷ Typical were William's remarks to King Max of Bavaria in 1860 (*Sybel* II, pp. 268-269), to Sir Andrew Buchanan (Horst Kohl: *Anhang zu den Gedanken und Erinnerungen* I, p. 47) and to Queen Victoria in 1863 (*Letters of Queen Victoria*, second series, I, p. 106), to Count Blome (*Sybel* IV, p. 123) and to Bismarck in 1865 (*Anhang* I, p. 118).

⁸⁸ Brandenburg's excellent summary of Austrian policy (*Untersuchungen* p. 438 f.) seems to err only in underestimating Austrian suspicions of Bismarck's "vergrößerungssüchtigen Militärpolitik" as Rechberg called it. Same error in his *Reichsgrundung* II, p. 113.

On the treatment to be meted out to Prussia, the Danube aristocracy were divided in opinion. Many wished to see the monarchy resume her role of champion of the German states.⁸⁹ Very few were actuated by sincere friendship for their North German kinsmen. The conciliatory policy of the elder Metternich still counted a following among the older conservatives,⁹⁰ yet it is probable that the Schwarzenberg attitude predominated. In a certain sense, Franz Joseph's policy struck a balance between these two viewpoints in his *entourage*. His diplomatic experience in the formative years had been gained, not under Metternich, but under Schwarzenberg, whom he had striven to imitate during the first decade of his reign.⁹¹ But as his disposition led him to temporize and balance rather than to strike out boldly, he was innately inclined toward a policy more akin to that of Metternich.⁹² In consequence, at any given time he would adopt either program which appeared to promise the best success in maintaining Austria's position in Germany and Italy. It was with a sense of relief that he had now turned back to the policy of Count Rechberg, for it seemed to foreshadow that harmony in Germany which was closest to Franz Joseph's heart.

AUSTRIA AND THE POWERS

While Franz Joseph is congratulating himself upon the new *entente* with Prussia, let us examine briefly the state of the monarchy's relations with Russia, England, and France.

Austria's most mighty neighbor, Russia, was still smarting under the ingratitude of the Habsburger during the Crimean war. The Tsar had witnessed with *Schadenfreude*, the defeat and weakening of Austria in 1859, and had granted official recognition to the new Italian kingdom partly through spite

⁸⁹ Paul Hassel: *Aus dem Leben des Königs Albert von Sachsen* II, p. 197.

⁹⁰ The most extreme was Baron Poche, *Statthalter* of Moravia, who was ready to relinquish German hegemony *in toto* to Prussia (Fröbel II, p. 318 f.).

⁹¹ Redlich: *Emperor Francis Joseph* p. 37.

⁹² Friedjung: *Aufsätze* p. 519. Redlich thinks Metternich's influence upon Franz Joseph was ephemeral (p. 22).

against the Danube state. In an autocracy where the personal inclinations of monarch and chief minister play a leading part in determining foreign policy, Austria had no hold on the affections of Alexander II nor the chancellor, Gorchakov. The Tsar inclined toward Prussia; his minister, toward France. Gorchakov was a "mortal enemy of Austria,"⁹³ and Alexander bore a deep dislike for Franz Joseph.⁹⁴ Moreover, the two countries were divided by conflicting interests in the Balkans,—Russia wanted to weaken Turkey, Austria to preserve the *status quo* unless an alteration should bring profit to herself alone,—and by the Pan Slavist propaganda for the freedom of the Slavs under the Austrian yoke. But for these divergences, the common desire of the two sovereigns to maintain peace, to prevent a resurgent Poland, and to uphold the autocratic conservative principles underlying their concepts of sovereign right should have brought Habsburg and Romanov closer together.⁹⁵

From the first, Rechberg had striven to make a breach in Russia's wall of official aloofness, and to efface once for all the mistakes of Count Buol.⁹⁶ The Russians seemed ready for a reconciliation, if Austria would work for a revision of the treaty of Paris. But while Franz Joseph, who met Alex-

⁹³ Rechberg's phrase (*Friedjung* II, p. 583). Cf. Vogt p. 209. Memor (Gramont) relates the story that Gorchakov's enmity was due to personal pique at the bad reception he received as envoy in Vienna (*L'Allemagne nouvelle* p. 148). Corroborated in *Denkwürdigkeiten des Botschafters General von Schweinitz* I, p. 210.

⁹⁴ Redlich: *Das Oesterreichische Staats- und Reichsproblem* II, p. 738.

⁹⁵ Cf. the Russian memorandum of May 1864 in [Julius von Eckardt]: *Von Nicolaus I. zu Alexander III.* (Leipzig 1881) pp. 210-211. The tone of the memorandum is on the whole pro-Prussian however.

⁹⁶ For the relations between Austria and Russia, 1859 to 1863, see Friedrich Graf Revertera: "Erinnerungen eines Diplomaten in St. Petersburg 1860 bis 1863," in *Deutsche Revue* XXVIII, 1903, Heft 1, pp. 257-272; Heft 2, pp. 33-50; Kurt Rheindorf: *Die Schwarze Meer (Pontus-) Frage vom Pariser Frieden von 1856 bis zum Abschluss der Londoner Konferenz von 1871* (Berlin 1925) pp. 26-34; Serge Goriainoff: "Les Étapes de l'alliance franco-russe 1853-1861," in *Revue de Paris* CIX, 1912, pp. 529-543, 755-776; François Charles-Roux: *Alexandre II, Gorchakoff, et Napoléon III* pp. 278-313; Zechlin pp. 66-68; Engel-Janosi pp. 82-84.

ander and King William at Warsaw in 1860, was willing to grant this demand in return for the abandonment of Gorchakov's *entente* with France, the Russians took the attitude that Austria owed them a debt, not they Austria. Nevertheless, the two monarchs did establish better personal relations.⁹⁷

Prussia could always outbid Austria for Alexander's friendship, for King William was the uncle of the Tsar, and the two sovereigns had no major interests which conflicted. And when Bismarck cleaved to Russia during the Polish revolution, while Austria flirted with France and England, Rechberg lost whatever ground he had regained in Petersburg. "An abyss separates us from Russia, however much we try to cover it with flowers," wrote the Austrian ambassador, Count Revertera, from the Neva.⁹⁸

At least, Austria was not directly menaced by her great Slavic neighbor, so long as that neighbor was still recovering from the effects of the Crimean war, and undergoing the pain of the "great reforms." In 1863, the Tsar had discouraged Bismarck from a proposed attack on Austria, when William was exasperated by the *Fürstentag*.⁹⁹ Russia desired to see Prussia and Austria remain on friendly terms, so as to provide a strong central-European bulwark against the "revolution," which Alexander had more recently begun to mistrust in France and Italy.¹⁰⁰ "In general," wrote Revertera a year later, "... Prussia is the inevitable connecting link between us and Russia."¹⁰¹ The Austrian envoy saw things darkly

⁹⁷ Engel-Janosi p. 83.

⁹⁸ Revertera to Mensdorff (?), letter of December 2/November 20, 1864 (HHS: *Nachlass Rechberg*).

⁹⁹ Bismarck's astonishing overtures to Russia were reported by Oubril, the Russian envoy in Berlin (Oubril to Gorchakov, September 3/15, 1864, cited from the Russian archives by R. H. Lord: "Bismarck and Russia in 1863," in *American Historical Review* XXIX, 1923, p. 47; cf. *Die auswärtige Politik Preussens 1858-1871*, III, pp. 786-793).

¹⁰⁰ Lord, *loc. cit.* p. 44; G. W. IV, p. 460.

¹⁰¹ Revertera to Mensdorff, letter of November 19/1, 1864. A little later: "Le Prince Gortchakow continue à me prêcher l'entente avec la Prusse." (Revertera to Mensdorff, No. 12 C, December 12/November 30, 1864: HHS.—Henceforth the symbol HHS will be omitted in citing regular diplomatic correspondence from the Vienna archives).

when he concluded, "If the accord of the two German powers should come to grief, Russia will range herself on Prussia's side, and will lend her moral and material aid according to circumstances."¹⁰²

* * * *

Whatever ground Franz Joseph had lost in Russian affections, he gained in British esteem, for the statesmen on the Thames had long seen in Austria a bulwark against the Muscovites. "If Austria were dismembered," wrote Palmerston, "France and Russia would shake hands across Germany, and the independence of Europe would be gone."¹⁰³ On her part, Austria wanted England's aid in restraining the dangerous fantasies of Napoleon, and needed the financial assistance of the great English banking houses. In no way did the *direct* interests of the two empires conflict, in no place were they competitors.

To be sure, the war of 1859 in which Franz Joseph was the tactical aggressor had aligned Britain against him. Ardent champions of the new Italy, Palmerston and John Russell were inclined to accept Napoleon's offer of an offensive and defensive alliance against the Habsburger, early in the next year.¹⁰⁴ But the cabinet voted it down, and not long after, the French annexation of Savoy and Nice sent a chill down the spine of the British people. In a rage, Palmerston faced about and formed a sort of secret personal *entente* with Rechberg against Napoleon, sending to his new friend ample documentary proof of French intrigues against Austria, in Italy, Hungary, and the Balkans.¹⁰⁵ After the Polish affair, in which each rendered the other diplomatic assistance, Franz Joseph expressed his gratification to Queen Victoria that England had kept Napoleon "in good order."¹⁰⁶

¹⁰² Revertera to Mensdorff, letter of November 19/1, 1864.

¹⁰³ *Secrets of the Second Empire* [Cowley Papers] p. 175. Cf. G. P. Gooch, *The Later Correspondence of Lord John Russell* II, p. 1.

¹⁰⁴ January 5, 1860 (Gooch and Ward: *Cambridge History of British Foreign Policy* II, p. 444).

¹⁰⁵ Friedjung: *Kampf* II, p. 584.

¹⁰⁶ Interview of September 3, 1863 at Schloss Coburg (*Letters of Queen Victoria*, second series, I, pp. 107-109).

Except for the Schleswig-Holstein question, the only point of difference which remained was Venetia. "I do not wish to see either the *Tedeschi* or the *Galli* drinking the waters of the Po," Lord Russell had written in 1859. "Let the Italians govern their own affairs—that is my motto."¹⁰⁷ Repeatedly he warned Austria not to attempt to reverse the process of Italian unification.¹⁰⁸ Eager to heal this festering sore in the body politic of Europe, the noble lord busied himself with schemes to induce Franz Joseph to part with his jewel in return for money, or lands on the lower Danube or elsewhere.¹⁰⁹ But Queen Victoria was unwilling to press Austria to the point of endangering good relations.¹¹⁰ If France wanted to extort Venetia by force, England would not aid her,¹¹¹ but neither would England lift a finger in opposition.¹¹²

At the same time, the British ministers did not discourage the Italians. They counselled Italy to wait until Austria was "sore pressed by dangers from within and without. That was the time when Italy would be able to . . . obtain Venice as the

¹⁰⁷ To Sir James Hudson, June 23, 1859 (Gooch: *Later Correspondence of Lord John Russell* II, p. 234).

¹⁰⁸ Gooch II, pp. 257, 267, 271, 286.

¹⁰⁹ For example, in 1861, Russell submitted the following plan to Palmerston: Turkey to cede Herzegovina to Italy for ten millions sterling. Italy to cede it to Austria, for Venetia. England to cede Zante and Cephalonia (Ionian Islands) to Greece, and Corfu to Austria, to give security to her Adriatic territories (Letter of October 17, 1861: Gooch II, pp. 279). In December 1864, Russell suggested to Italy to offer 20 or 30 millions "to buy the Danubian provinces, to buy Prince Couza, to buy the nobles, the clergy, and the peasantry, and induce them and Turkey to place Moldo-Wallachia in the hands of Austria" (Gooch p. 291). Palmerston doubted that Austria would part with Venetia, except after a war (Gooch II, p. 288 f.; E. Ashley: *The Life and Correspondence of Henry John Temple Viscount Palmerston* II, p. 217 f.).

¹¹⁰ Gooch II, pp. 284, 285.

¹¹¹ The Queen to Russell, December 16, 1860 (Gooch II, p. 268); Russell to Clarendon, October 3, 1861 (*Ibid.* II, p. 278).

¹¹² Russell to Elliot, December 27, 1863 (*Ibid.* II, p. 287 f.); Palmerston to Leopold I, August 28, 1864 (Ashley II, p. 256). If Italy were defeated by Austria, England "would save her from any other penalty for her rashness than that of paying an indemnity. . . ." (Gooch II, p. 287 f.).

price of her friendship or even of her neutrality."¹¹³ But as Britain's anger increased during the Danish war of 1864, Russell went farther, and said to Pasolini, "If you *do* choose to make war for Venetia, we shall not oppose you."¹¹⁴ He refrained from touching such a match to Garibaldi, who was visiting English shores at the time.¹¹⁵

Could England be counted on to support Austria's case against Prussia more than against Italy? British feelings toward the German rivals were altered, and British opinion on the political problems of Germany became confused, by the kaleidoscopic succession of events within the Confederation after 1859, and the constitutional struggles in Prussia and Austria. While Downing Street was glad to accept Austrian support in the concert of Europe, yet Austria's weakness since the Italian war unmistakably lowered her value, in comparison to Prussia's, as a counterpoise to France. Lord Russell confessed that he still had an affection for "the Austrian sick-man,"¹¹⁶ and rejoiced at Franz Joseph's attempt to revitalize Germany at the *Fürstentag*.¹¹⁷ Yet there were many Englishmen who began to look to Prussia as a more capable leader in uniting the German people.¹¹⁸ Liberal idealists like Sir Robert Morier sympathized with the liberal national movement in Prussia and the smaller states.¹¹⁹ Queen Victoria, whose influence on policy was not negligible, held the viewpoint of her Coburg relatives, and tried to maintain impartial friendship with both German powers. But she had no ties of blood with the Austrian court such as she had with Berlin in the person of her eldest daughter, the Crown Princess of Prussia.¹²⁰ Though

¹¹³ Gooch II, p. 287.

¹¹⁴ Russell to Elliot, May 2, 1864 (Gooch II, p. 289) Cf. Ashley II, p. 256.

¹¹⁵ Gooch II, p. 289.

¹¹⁶ Russell to Clarendon, October 3, 1861 (Gooch II, p. 278). Russell also evinced an interest in Austria's steps toward parliamentary government, which Rechberg took pains to bring to his attention (Redlich II, p. 739 ff.).

¹¹⁷ Gooch II, p. 303.

¹¹⁸ A. A. W. Ramsay: *Idealism and Foreign Policy* p. 49.

¹¹⁹ See his *Memoirs and Letters*, and Ramsay p. 50.

¹²⁰ The letters of Victoria Louise to her mother have been edited by Sir Frederick Ponsonby: *Letters of the Empress Frederick*. Many are also included in the *Letters of Queen Victoria*.

she shared the antipathy of this strong-minded lady for Bismarck, and pitied the "poor king" who was dragged into a brutal foreign policy by "that man," nevertheless she considered Prussia's aspiration for "parity" with Austria as justified,¹²¹ and advocated it before Franz Joseph himself.¹²²

But if the ruling powers in England thus seemed to favor Prussian "pretensions" in Germany, they did so only so long as these were peacefully pressed. Like the Tsar, the Queen of England wanted "Austria and Prussia to go together"¹²³ for a war would force the one or the other to purchase France's aid with the Rhinelands. Few men in England liked Bismarck and his aggressive methods,¹²⁴ especially after his harsh treatment of Denmark, and public opinion begrudged him Schleswig-Holstein almost as much as the Queen, who was an ardent "Augustenburger." Distinctly pro-Austrian were Clarendon and Russell. The only thing they reproached Austria for, was "not sufficiently resisting M. de Bismarck, and not following her own inspirations and equitable instincts." "I regret to see the secondary states lose confidence in Austria little by little," said Lord John to the envoy from Vienna: "*My wish would be to see you at the head of Germany. . .*"¹²⁵ Keen to derive profit from this British antipathy toward his rival, Count Rechberg sounded the right note when he told Lord Bloomfield of his hope that "the pacific intentions of the two governments

¹²¹ In an interview with the King of Prussia, August 31, 1863, Victoria told him "that, naturally, no arrangement could be successful in which Prussia had not complete parity . . . and that the King might rely on my . . . doing whatever lay in my power to bring about a good understanding. . . ." (*Letters of Queen Victoria*, second series, I, p. 107).

¹²² Interview of September 3, 1863 (*Ibid.* I, pp. 107-109).

¹²³ *Ibid.* I, p. 105.

¹²⁴ Ramsay p. 145. Even keen observers considered Bismarck merely "this season's daffodil" who would be replaced sooner or later by a Liberal government.

¹²⁵ "*Mon vœu serait de vous voir à la tête de l'Allemagne, et croyez bien que nous ferons toujours notre possible pour entretenir avec l'Autriche les rapports les plus amicaux.*" (Apponyi to Rechberg, letter of August 24, 1864).

will become a bond of future union and of confidential relations between them."¹²⁶

On the whole, then, England's friendship was more certain than that of Russia, and England's voice would be raised against Prussia if Bismarck should play fast and loose with the Confederation. But it was not long before Vienna discovered that Bismarck would heed a warning from the Tsar sooner than one from Palmerston, and that if Austria were forced into a German war, Great Britain would not mobilize one man to aid her. Should France enter the fray, then of course, an entirely new horoscope must be cast. After all, it was not the attitude of the British government nor the Tsar which concerned the *Ballplatz* one half so much as it was that of the "incalculable gambler," Napoleon III.

* * * *

With the defeat of Austria on the battlefields of northern Italy in 1859, Louis Napoleon had reasserted his dominant position in Europe.¹²⁷ As if in proof of this, the defeated Habsburger sought his alliance within a month of the preliminaries of Villafranca.¹²⁸ Never was Franz Joseph more cordial to a Bonaparte.¹²⁹ This surprising act was the result both of his

¹²⁶ Bloomfield to Russell, letter of October 25, 1864 (F. O. 356 Bloomfield Papers 39).

¹²⁷ There is no adequate biography of Napoleon III, nor complete study of his diplomacy in the light of the countless new sources for the Second Empire. The individual monographic studies are too numerous to list here. For his consort, see especially Count Fleury (editor): *Memoirs of the Empress Eugénie*, and Robert Sencourt: *The Life of the Empress Eugénie*.

¹²⁸ For the relations between Austria and France from 1859 to 1863, see Hengelmüller's articles in *Deutsche Revue* XXXVIII, 1913, Heft 2, pp. 33 ff., 154 ff.; Heft 3, pp. 299 ff.; Engel-Janosi pp. 56-76; Stern VIII, chapter viii, here and there; Charles-Roux pp. 278-313; Henry Salomon: *L'ambassade de Richard de Metternich à Paris* pp. 1-72; Lynn M. Case: *Franco-Italian Relations 1860-1865*; Francesco Salata: "Napoleone III e Francesco Giuseppe alla pace di Villafranca," in *Nuova Antologia* CCXXXII, 1923, pp. 289-311.

¹²⁹ Franz Joseph wrote to Napoleon: "Not only for the present, but for the future, I shall greet with joy the intimate alliance of France and Austria, an alliance which I consider the best guarantee of order and progress in Europe." He was willing to make great sacrifices for the "reaffirmation of our personal friendship and . . . the establishing of loyal and harmonious relations between our governments—things which I desire with all my heart." (Salata pp. 299-300).

anger at Prussia's dog-in-the-manger attitude, and the desire to detach Napoleon from "revolutionary" Piedmont.¹³⁰ Franz Joseph hoped thus to save his remaining province of Venetia, and his influence over the lesser Italian states.

The hand of friendship was accepted by the French Emperor, who hoped indeed to persuade Austria to compromise with nationalist Italy, but for the time being Napoleon concealed this ulterior aim. An alliance was in sight when, almost as suddenly as the *entente* had sprung up, it withered away.

The conflagration of national feeling, which spread through Italy after the war, made the Zurich arrangements a dead letter before their ink had dried. Vienna realized that Napoleon either would not or could not carry out his Villafranca promises. On January 3, 1860, Prince Metternich formally declared that the treaty of Zurich had been broken. The following day, Napoleon called to the foreign ministry the warm friend of Italy, Thouvenel.

Franz Joseph felt that he had been duped by Napoleon. The deception deepened his natural Habsburg dislike for the French *parvenu*, as well as for the House of Savoy; and the despoiled princelings who found an asylum in the *Hofburg* did their best to nourish this resentment. Worse still, Napoleon was suspected of having a hand in Cavour's secret negotiations with Hungarian revolutionists.¹³¹ Henceforth, the *Ballplatz* scented a double intrigue in every move of the *Tuileries*, and every effort of Napoleon III to better relations was discounted in advance.

In truth, Napoleon's ill-concealed desire to transform the map of Europe menaced Austria's territorial integrity in several vital spots. His longing for a bit of Rhine territory threatened Austrian prestige in Germany. The reconstitution of Poland meant the loss of Galicia. And the Napoleonic solution

¹³⁰ Letter of Rechberg to Paul Esterhazy, c. August 1, 1859 (*Secrets of the Second Empire* p. 187).

¹³¹ Rechberg knew of these in 1860 through Palmerston's confidences (Friedjung II, p. 584) if not earlier through Austrian spies. (Cf. Oncken: *Friedrich von Baden* I, p. 198).

of the Italian question, whatever else it implied, demanded first and foremost the cession of Venetia to the new Italian kingdom.

In the seven years following Solferino, the French monarch pursued no other object more consistently and relentlessly than Venetia. So long as Austria stood defiant behind the Mincio, she might always seize the first good opportunity to reconquer Lombardy and restore the petty princes to power. Napoleon was realist enough to see that of all his schemes, the reunion of Venetia to the new Italy would be the most generally popular and the most feasible. It lay in the logic of events. He wanted, if possible, to secure Austria's *voluntary* withdrawal from Italy, so that no desire for revenge for 1859 would remain to endanger his favorite creation. If Austria refused, however, there were two ways to coerce her: an international congress, or a war.

The method of persuasion was obviously the best. Both the Emperor and the Empress sought therefore to convince Metternich, upon whom they lavished the sunshine of their favor, that they did not desire the unity of Italy any more than Austria did.¹³² On the contrary, they preferred the system of the Zurich treaty somewhat altered: viz., a federation of three states, a kingdom of Northern Italy including Tuscany and the Emilia, a restored kingdom of Two Sicilies, and a central Papal state under a secular government.¹³³ For the cession of Venetia, they offered manifold compensations, especially in South Germany.¹³⁴ And even in their Mexican and

¹³² Metternich to Rechberg, September 1, 1862, and March 29, 1863 (HHS); Metternich to Mensdorff, June 6, 1866 (Hermann Oncken: *Die Rheinpolitik Kaiser Napoleons III.* I, p. 254).

¹³³ Metternich to Rechberg, letter of June 30, 1861. Similar proposals of a tripartite Italy were reported by Metternich to Rechberg, without details, on November 25, 1859, and January 2, 1861; and with more details, on May 14, 1861 and March 29, 1863; also by Baron Hubner to Rechberg, letter of April 18, 1862. (All these citations from excerpts in the *Nachlass Rechberg*, HHS).

¹³⁴ Metternich to Rechberg, September 1, 1862 (excerpt in *Nachlass Rechberg*, HHS).

Polish ventures, the golden thread of Venetia reappeared as a motive.¹³⁵

As the discontent in Poland opened another grand vista to the imperial dreamers, their desire for the Austrian alliance increased.¹³⁶ In February 1863, Napoleon made a formal and pressing offer to Franz Joseph.¹³⁷ With Austria at his side and England behind him, he expected at last to launch the European war which would solve the Polish, the Italian, and perhaps the German questions *à la napoléonienne* at one stroke. Aflame with enthusiasm, Metternich himself was soon drafting a "secret understanding" which could be developed into an offensive and defensive alliance, and was called to Vienna to report all details.¹³⁸

But the temperature in the *Hofburg* was far cooler than in the *Tuileries*. In Vienna the view still prevailed that the French alliance was only a *pis-aller* to prevent a Prusso-French combination. When therefore Prince Metternich laid before the Emperor the alliance-project which he and Napoleon had concocted, Franz Joseph and Rechberg unhesitatingly rejected a relationship in which "the risk was certain, and

¹³⁵ Maurice Paléologue: *The Tragic Empress* p. 92. Eugénie wanted an archduke in Poland also (*Ibid.* p. 227; Oncken I, p. 4).

¹³⁶ For general Franco-Austrian relations in 1863, see Engel-Janosi pp. 90-122; Zechlin chapters v and vi, here and there; Charles-Roux pp. 333-336; Salomon pp. 73-90; Émile Ollivier: *L'Empire Libéral* VI, chapters iii, vi, and x; Hanns Schlitter: "Die Frage der Wiederherstellung Polens im oesterreichischen Ministerrat 1863," in *Oesterreichische Rundschau* LVIII, 1919, pp. 63-69.

¹³⁷ The first new archival light was thrown upon these negotiations by Pierre de la Gorce in his *Histoire du Second Empire* IV (Paris 1899) pp. 441-444, from Gramont's reports. Hengelmüller in 1914 (*Deutsche Revue* XXXIX, Heft 3, pp. 40-44) wrote the first account from the Austrian sources, but was improved upon by Stern (IX, pp. 164-168) in 1923, while Engel-Janosi (pp. 92-97) in 1927 revealed further details. The chief documents are printed in Oncken I, pp. 3-16. For Eugénie's famous *exposé* to Metternich, see Alfred Stern: "L'Insurrection polonaise et l'Impératrice Eugénie," in *Revue historique* CXXXVII, 1921, pp. 66-73; E. C. Corti: "Les Idées de l'Impératrice Eugénie," in *Revue des Études napoléoniennes*, September 1922 p. 147 ff.

¹³⁸ Draft of the secret *entente* in Oncken I, p. 14.

the advantages were problematical."¹³⁹ Prussia and France had become enemies in the Polish question and the necessity for an Austro-French alliance was therefore lacking.

The "secret instructions," which Rechberg composed at this time as a catechism for Metternich, reveal the innermost thoughts of Franz Joseph and his foreign minister, on relations with the Bonaparte.¹⁴⁰

An alliance with France [began this interesting document] if not impossible in the future, at least was still very remote from practical politics. In order to make a cession of Venetia palatable to the Austrian public, adequate compensations would have to be gained in Germany and the Balkans by launching into an adventurous policy contrary to Austria's traditions. At the same time, however, the Emperor could not consent to the alienation of any German land whatever (though France might take any other lands she wished), nor could he cede Galicia without a simultaneous and equivalent gift of territory from France. "In a word, the aggrandizement of Austria in Germany, which would always be a *sine qua non* of a voluntary cession of Venetia, would make necessary on the one hand, the annihilation of Prussia, and on the other, would imply for Austria the obligation of defending German nationality and not allowing German territory to pass under foreign domination."

In this balancing of present objections and future possibilities, this curbing French dreams of the Rhine yet confessing for the first time that the Austrian mind was not entirely closed to the idea of yielding Venetia, Rechberg tried to check the belligerency of Napoleon and Metternich without weakening relations with Paris. To soften the rejection still more, the Austrian minister wrote to Drouyn, that it was his wish " to go

¹³⁹ Rechberg's letter to Drouyn de Lhuys, March 21, 1863 (Stern IX, p. 167). " Perdre la Vénétie et la Galicie pour acquérir une maigre compensation en Orient et se trouver en Allemagne dans une situation pire que la présente, serait une perspective peu attrayante." (Rechberg's letter to Metternich, February 27, 1863).

¹⁴⁰ Secret instructions for Prince Metternich, March 21, 1863 (see Appendix A, No. 1, below). They were probably taken by him to Paris. They were not intended to be shown to Napoleon, but provided material for confidential interviews with him, in which their purely hypothetical character was to be stressed (Engel-Janosi p. 97 gives a summary; Stern IX, p. 167, omits any reference to them).

hand in hand with France in all the great European questions." ¹⁴¹

Though disappointed, Napoleon took the rejection with a good grace, and accepted what diplomatic cooperation he could obtain from Austria in the Polish negotiations. When the time came in October to pass from threats to action against the Tsar, the French Emperor made a last desperate attempt to draw Vienna with him. He was ready to drop the demand for Galicia, and declared that he had lost his appetite for the Rhinelands.¹⁴² But Rechberg, who secretly longed to break with France, would not budge an inch from the March instructions. As Austria would have to bear the brunt of an attack if war came, he refused to discuss the new overtures. Yet, in fear that the German rival would step into Austria's place beside the western powers if vacated, Rechberg still tried to bolster up the ever weaker *entente* with France.¹⁴³

But Napoleon's patience was at last exhausted. His prestige had suffered a blow from the Polish fiasco, for which he now largely blamed Austria. He had failed to persuade Franz Joseph to abandon Venetia. In fact, the Austrian monarch had attempted in August at the Frankfurt *Fürstentag* to bind that province more closely to his empire by a federal guarantee for its possession. To these injuries others were added. Austria refused to attend the congress which Napoleon called in November to save his face, and at which the Danube state was expected to pay the piper. In the following February, he feared an Austro-Russian alliance, and in June, a revival of the Holy Alliance, in which he saw the reactionary hand

¹⁴¹ Stern IX, p. 167.

¹⁴² The terms to be offered through Prince Czartoryski came closer to Austria's wishes than any previous offers. For the first time, Venetia was not mentioned. The new Poland would not include Galicia, but only Prussian and Russian territory. Austria was promised the Catholic portions of Silesia, and part of Bosnia. Prussia was to be weakened further by cession of territory to Saxony. Finally, France renounced the conquest of the Rhinelands (Metternich to Rechberg, letter of October 8: Engel-Janosi p. 114). Rechberg refused to let Czartoryski come to Vienna!

¹⁴³ Engel-Janosi pp. 114-115.

of Austria. In Vienna, on the other hand, there was the constant fear that the French monarch was only awaiting his chance to intervene in Germany, to stir up revolution in Hungary, to spur Italy on to attack Venetia, and thus to take a bloody revenge.

Austrian fears however were exaggerated. Napoleon had had quite enough of action and contemplated no armed intervention in the Schleswig-Holstein imbroglio, if only to pay England back for failing him in 1863.¹⁴⁴ Instead, the French Emperor made up his mind to revert to his favorite plan of an *entente* with Prussia, and foresaw the possibility of accomplishing his dearest ambitions without firing a shot. He had marked Bismarck for the role of a German Cavour, who would provoke Austria to war and bid for Napoleon's support by an offer of border provinces, Landau, or the Saar, or Luxemburg. As he thought Prussia the weaker rival, she should be supported by Italy, burning to conquer Venice. With the opposing forces fairly equalized, he could act as umpire and at the proper time dictate the terms of peace.¹⁴⁵ Italy freed at last from Austrian influence would accommodate herself to the Pope, Austria would face toward the Balkans, and become embroiled with Russia, Germany would be divided at the Main, Prussia enlarged and dominant in the north, the southern states independent, French pride satisfied with the frontiers of 1814, Luxemburg, and the overthrow of the Vienna settlement. Thus Napoleon's dynasty would sit firmly in the French saddle, astride of Europe.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴⁴ Drouyn to La Tour, January 21, 1864 (*Origines* I, p. 166 f.). Goltz' report, February 1, 1864 (Brandenburg: *Untersuchungen* p. 398 note 2).

¹⁴⁵ This interpretation of Napoleon's German policy in 1864-1866, enunciated by Sybel, Friedjung, Brandenburg and others, is borne out by the documents in the *Origines Diplomatiques* (vols. I-XII), and especially by the reports of Goltz and Metternich (partially printed by Oncken), and of Nigra, Italian ambassador in Paris (published by A. La Marmora: *Un Po' Piu di Luce*, by L. Chiala; *Ancora un Po' Piu di Luce*, and by E. Passamonti, in *Risorgimento Italiano* XXII, 1929, pp. 323-469).

¹⁴⁶ Brandenburg's dispassionate analysis of Napoleon's aims (*Untersuchungen* p. 473) and his view that "the prime benefit that France was to derive from

Napoleon's greatest bugbear was therefore an alliance between Austria and Prussia, through which each might guarantee the possessions of the other. To forestall this, he offered Bismarck his alliance in November 1863, and again in January 1864.¹⁴⁷ He tried to kindle the Prussian minister-president's ambition by suggesting the annexation of "Schleswig-Holstein and neighboring lands,"¹⁴⁸ knowing well that Austria would strenuously oppose any increase of Prussian territory. Though the alliance was declined, he kept in close touch with Bismarck, and was pleased by his assurances that the Austrian alliance was only a temporary expedient. Unlike the Tsar and Queen Victoria, Napoleon had never counselled the two German powers to work together in harmony,¹⁴⁹ and he did not expect their present friendship to last long. "There are certain people who are thick as thieves at a fair," he wrote Arese, "but after the fair comes the quarrel."¹⁵⁰ While proclaiming his disinterestedness, he secretly tried to fan the flame of discord between Austria, the *Mittelstaaten*, and Prussia.

These aims, logical for a ruler of France, were clearly per-

an Austro-Prussian war consisted in a bettering of his [Napoleon's] international position" seems better founded than Oncken's thesis (*Rheinpolitik*, introduction p. 17, text pp. 3, 5, 7, footnotes, etc.) that the Emperor's chief object was the left bank of the Rhine. Cf. Bismarck's judgment in April 1866 (*G. W. V.*, p. 475); Zechlin p. 14. Salomon's estimate (p. 81) is too conservative.

¹⁴⁷ Sybel III, p. 123 f.; Oncken I, p. 24.

¹⁴⁸ Oncken I, p. 29. Even in the midst of the Polish crisis (June 1863) Napoleon had suggested to William's envoy the motto: "Das Vaterland muss grösser sein." (Oncken I, p. 18).

¹⁴⁹ The one exception was his remark to Metternich in March 1862, "that in Germany anything good could be achieved in a peaceful way only through an understanding between Austria and Prussia," but this was probably calculated only to sound the Austrian ambassador as to the existence of such an understanding (Hengelmüller, in *Deutsche Revue* XXXVIII, 1913, Heft 3 p. 304).

¹⁵⁰ March 27, 1864 (Comte J. Grabinski: *Un ami de Napoleon III, le comte Arese* [Paris 1897] p. 221). To Nigra in December 1863, Napoleon said: "We will bring it to pass that Prussia and Austria turn their cannon on each other." (Sybel III, p. 162).

ceived by the German rulers. To prevent their materializing, Franz Joseph felt it a matter of "honor" to cling as long as possible to the hope of a Prussian or Russian alliance, and only after one of the other conservative monarchs had pointed the way to Paris, and played traitor to conservative interests, would he allow himself to negotiate an alliance with the "Napoleonide" in Paris.

* * * * *

In his new orientation toward Prussia in November 1863, Franz Joseph was not followed by his public. The majority of Austrians were less hostile toward France than their government. Some wished to press even farther toward a firm alliance with the Napoleonic empire, but the majority balked at more than friendly intercourse. The minority—the Austrian Gallophobes of various shades—were the heirs of an older more widespread anti-French attitude dating from the Napoleonic era. Many of the army officers inherited the traditional military hostility, and deplored the new and not wholly merited prestige of the French army since 1856 and 1859. The feudal nobility and the imperial family abhorred the democratic foundation of the French dynasty and kept themselves somewhat aloof from French influences. Even some of the new parliamentarians feared the example of Napoleon's dictatorship, and shared the patriotic dislike of the German liberals for France.

The Austrian friends of France were of two sorts, those who might be called positive, and those who might be called negative. The first considered the French alliance to be the best and the strongest that Austria could obtain. Their hearts and their minds were in it. The "negative" group on the other hand were thinking primarily of the Prussian danger. They sought in the French alliance purely an instrument of defense or revenge against the aggressive rival in the north.

At the head of the "positive" group was Prince Metternich.¹⁵¹ Still in his early thirties, the Prince had from the

¹⁵¹ There is no biography of Richard Metternich, and one searches in vain for a satisfactory character-sketch in Salomon's study of the Prince's am-

first moment of his Paris mission strongly advised his government against a hesitating policy toward France. Either an alliance *with* Napoleon, or an energetic coalition *against* him: "With the Emperor of the French the happy medium is impossible and always dangerous," he had written.¹⁵² Contrary to the German *Politik* of his famous father, Prince Richard favored the alliance alternative, and did not hesitate to speak his mind even to Franz Joseph himself.¹⁵³ His most influential supporter in Vienna was no less a person than the under-secretary for foreign affairs, Baron von Meysenbug.¹⁵⁴ At the court of the Tuileries, Prince Metternich and his highly original wife won a place for themselves in the favor of Napoleon and Eugénie second to none among the foreign diplomats.¹⁵⁵ The Empress was a partisan of a Franco-Austrian alliance,¹⁵⁶ largely because of her clerical sympathies, and

bassadorship in Paris. Good brief appraisals are however to be found in Egon Conte Corti: *Maximilian and Charlotte of Mexico* (New York 1928) I, pp. 96-97; Ernst von Plener: *Erinnerungen* I, pp. 31-32; Beust: *Aus Drei Vierteljahrhunderten* II, p. 35; Stern IX, pp. 163-164; Engel-Janosi pp. 88-89. It is to be hoped that Count Corti will some day give us a biography of this engaging personality

¹⁵² Metternich to Rechberg, August 16, 1859, No. 4A.

¹⁵³ Corti I, p. 97. Cf. Vitzthum p. 66. There was no love lost between Metternich and Rechberg, who considered the envoy "weak and superficial." (Engel-Janosi p. 88). Cf. Beust II, p. 35.

¹⁵⁴ He was the chief assistant of Rechberg and later of Mensdorff, and approved dispatches in the absence of the minister. On Meysenbug, see Friedjung: *Kampf* II, p. 583 (quoting Rechberg); Alfred von Arneth: *Aus Meinem Leben* II, p. 352 f.; Beust II, p. 39.

¹⁵⁵ For the social activities of the Metternichs at court, see the delightful memoirs of the Boston woman, Mme. de Hegermann-Lindenchrone: *In the Courts of Memory* (New York 1912) p. 114 f.; also Mme. Carette: *Souvenirs intimes de la Cour des Tuileries*, third series (Paris 1891) p. 242 f.; Fleury and Sonolet: *La société du Second Empire* III (Paris 1924) p. 273 f.; *Souvenirs de la Princesse Pauline de Metternich* (Paris 1922) p. 77 ff. A. F. Seligmann has a brief sketch of Princess Metternich's life and character in *Neue Oesterreichische Biographie* III, 1926, pp. 43-52.

¹⁵⁶ "... moi [je] suis connue pour être autrichienne et [je] m'en honore," Eugénie said to Metternich (Metternich to Rechberg, September 1, 1862, No. 50 A Secret). Bismarck's estimate of the Empress was: "... Katolisch, päpstlich, konservativ für das Ausland, sogar oesterreichisch. Sie hat Metternich gern um sich. ..." (Letter to Bernstorff, June 28, 1862: *Bismarck-Jahrbuch* VI, p. 151).

whatever friends such a policy attracted were generally from the ranks of the strong Catholics. It was advantageous to mutual good-feeling, that Drouyn de Lhuys always considered the Austrian alliance "his dream,"¹⁵⁷ and that the Duke of Gramont, ambassador to the *Hofburg*, since 1862, was a clerical sympathizer.¹⁵⁸

But the Metternichs and the Meysenbugs were outnumbered by those Austrians like Biegeleben who in 1863 and 1864, if not earlier, acquired a taste for the French alliance from their hostility toward Prussia.¹⁵⁹ After the Danish war, in order to check Bismarck, the *Staatsminister* Schmerling spurred his journalists to advertise the advantages of the French alliance, supported by England.¹⁶⁰ And many new adherents were gained among the middle classes, whose voice was later heard in the *Reichsrat*.¹⁶¹ Others, whose pocket-books would profit by free trade, welcomed the broader markets which a commercial treaty with France would open up.

These advocates of the western alliance did not close their eyes to the problems of Venetia, Poland, and the Rhine, but they pointed out more powerful interests which drew the two empires together. Austria and France, they said, were the mightiest protectors of the Pope and the Catholic Church throughout the world. France was just as interested as Aus-

¹⁵⁷ Vitzthum p. 64.

¹⁵⁸ He was popular with the Viennese, who considered him a friend of Austria and the dynasty (Przibram: *Erinnerungen eines alten Oesterreichers* I p. 142). Yet Rechberg disliked Gramont, whom he accused of indifference to the truth (Friedjung II, p. 584).

¹⁵⁹ Cf. Bismarck's somewhat exaggerated charges in a table talk on December 5, 1870, in M. Busch: *Bismarck, Some Secret Pages of his History* I, p. 366 (this section omitted from the German edition, and from G. W. VII, p. 434 f.).

¹⁶⁰ G. W. IV, p. 571; *Origines* IV, p. 249 f.; O. Bandmann: *Die deutsche Presse und die Entwicklung der deutschen Frage* p. 48. Beust assisted the propaganda in his *Leipziger Zeitung* (*Origines* IV, p. 282).

¹⁶¹ See the speeches of such leaders as Schindler, who recommended a study of Kaunitz' diplomacy, and Kuranda, who warned against a Franco-Prussian alliance. Session of December 2, 1864 (*Stenographische Protokolle über die Sitzungen des Hauses der Abgeordneten des Reichsraths*, third session, volume I pp. 110-120, 131).

tria in preventing a consolidation of Germany and of Italy, they argued.¹⁶² Finally, Napoleon might be very useful in assisting Austrian expansion into the Balkans.¹⁶³ Such Franco-Austrian collaboration harked back to the venerable precedent of Maria Theresa and Kaunitz, protagonists as exalted as the sponsors of an opposite policy, Metternich *père* and Schwarzenberg.

* * * * *

If Austrian opinion was thus divided on the issue of how far to go with France, there was more unanimity with respect to Italy. From the Emperor down to the humblest citizen, all were contemptuous of the Italians, whom the Austrians had always conquered in battle.¹⁶⁴ The *Hofburg* had not recognized the kingdom of Italy, and had waged a constant, if hopeless, campaign to keep other states from doing so.¹⁶⁵ In Venetia, a large army was maintained on a war footing, and the boundary was almost hermetically closed to the rest of Italy.

The official attitude toward the Italian "monstrosity" was one of "watchful waiting" for the collapse of a none too stable government based on "revolutionary" principles. In 1859 Franz Joseph had said, "We'll reconquer Lombardy."¹⁶⁶ In 1860, Rechberg had officially refused to renounce such a prospect.¹⁶⁷ Keeping in touch with the peninsula through his spies, Rechberg felt certain that sectional jealousies, party

¹⁶² Biegeleben's memorandum of October 19, 1864 (Engel-Janosi p. 126 f.).

¹⁶³ From 1859 to 1862 Napoleon had repeatedly directed Austrian attention toward the Balkans. In 1863 he gave up the attempt, realizing that Austria was more interested in German territory and influence. But in 1866, he again sounded the Balkan note.

¹⁶⁴ Even at Solferino, the Austrian wing under Benedek was victorious over the Italian troops. Franz Joseph called the Italians "pickpockets and land-thieves" (Redlich: *Francis Joseph* p. 273).

¹⁶⁵ In 1862, Russia and Prussia had accorded Italy recognition, partly as a slap at Austria. In 1865, Austria failed to deter certain German states and Spain from doing the same.

¹⁶⁶ To Kempen (Engel-Janosi p. 58, note 86; Redlich p. 277).

¹⁶⁷ Hengelmüller: "Graf Alois Karolyi," in *Deutsche Revue* XXXVIII, 1913, Heft 2, p. 286.

strife, and financial chaos would wreck the new state before many years.¹⁶⁸ From certain utterances of the oracle on the Seine, he judged that Napoleon too foresaw such an event, and would be found ready to reinstate the King of Naples and enlarge the Pope's territories.¹⁶⁹ There were others in the *Ballplatz* who thought that Napoleon might be encouraged to take a further slice of land from Piedmont, and some still clung to the hope of pitting the forces of France against Victor Emanuel.¹⁷⁰

But Schmerling and the Great-Germanists did not wish to turn the clock backward in Italy: they would not hear of a reconquest of Lombardy.¹⁷¹ The Austrian merchants and many of the liberals wanted to reopen the gateway to the peninsula, and some of the papers began again in 1864 to urge that the existing facts be recognized.¹⁷² A few farsighted persons were even willing to let Venetia go for a good price, thinking the state would be well rid of a costly and dangerous burden.¹⁷³ But the vast majority did not deem it consis-

¹⁶⁸ Engel-Janosi p. 146. In 1865, Rechberg's successor, Count Mensdorff, said to Lord Bloomfield that "the Imperial government had no confidence in the stability of the present state of things in Italy. he thought that the existing fabrick [sic] had no solid foundations and would tumble to pieces sooner or later" (Bloomfield to Russell, April 13, 1865, No. 29 Confidential.—F. O. 7 Austria 683). Cf. *Briefe Kaiser Franz Josephs I. an seine Mutter* p. 300.

¹⁶⁹ Engel-Janosi p. 146.

¹⁷⁰ Oncken: *Friedrich von Baden* I, pp. 198-199, Engel-Janosi p. 127.

¹⁷¹ Engel-Janosi p. 149.

¹⁷² Cf. Bismarck to William, October 16, 1864 (*G. W. IV*, p. 573). In 1862 several leading journalists had advocated the recognition of Italy on the basis of the *status quo*, among them Friedmann (O. B. Friedmann: *Zehn Jahre Oesterreichischer Politik* I [Vienna 1879] p. xv) and the *Presse*, the leading newspaper of Vienna. The latter however gave it up later, because its subscribers fell off. In September 1864, two of the ablest journalists of the *Presse* started a new paper, the *Neue Freie Presse*, and began boldly to call for recognition of Italy. But a month later, it too decided to drop so unpopular a platform (Bloomfield to Russell, letters of September 8 and October 13, 1864.—F. O. 356 Bloomfield Papers 39).

¹⁷³ Friedjung hints that Schmerling held such ideas, and states definitely that the minister of finance, Plener, wanted to sell Venetia (*Historische Aufsätze* p. 313).

tent with Austrian honor to part with so rich a province.¹⁷⁴

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To summarize briefly the situation in the autumn of 1863, — there was a strong current of public opinion in Austria hostile to Russia, hostile to Prussia, friendly to France and England, but contemptuous of Italy. The court itself, though betraying fewer antipathies, was divided between the Metternichians and the Schwarzenbergians, and this rift of opinion reached into the innermost bureaus of the *Ballplatz*.

The body politic of Austria was still suffering, both from the excision and exhaustion of 1859 and from the conflicting prescriptions and the February tonic administered to induce her recovery. Those enthusiasts, Schmerling and Biegeleben, were no more successful in resuscitating Great-Germany than their predecessors; and since the Frankfurt fiasco, their names were to be discredited for many a month. Only Dr. Plener's budgetary diet showed salutary effects upon the health of the "Austrian sick man."

Nor was Austria's external position more encouraging than her internal condition. France, piqued at many a rebuff, was more hostile than at any time since 1859. To Russian enmity at the actions of 1854-1855 was now added disgust with Austria's recent wavering in the Polish affair. Italy was impatiently awaiting the opportunity to seize Venetia and Rome. Though England was friendly, she differed with Austria on the fundamental question of Italy, if not on the hegemony of Germany. Finally, there was Prussia. Cherishing the memories of Olmütz and the *Fürstentag*, biding her time to attain parity, or preponderance in North Germany, or the exclusion of Austria altogether, Prussia was a rival and enemy in the guise of a friend, Bismarck a wolf in sheep's clothing.

Because they saw no better alternative in this constellation of Europe, Rechberg and Franz Joseph formed their new *en-*

¹⁷⁴ Lord Bloomfield wrote of "the feeling which prevails almost unanimously in Austria . . . that Venetia must not be lost to her." (Bloomfield to Russell, letter of October 13 —F. O. 356 Bloomfield Papers 39).

tente with Bismarck and King William,—purely a “cabinet-combination,”—against the wishes of the majority of both Austrians and Prussians. They were soon to be confronting the hostile opinion of all Germany and western Europe as well.

CHAPTER II

AUSTRIA FORGES HER OWN CHAINS

FROM ENTENTE TO ALLIANCE

FRANZ JOSEPH had welcomed an understanding with Prussia as a protection in the storms which the Schleswig-Holstein difficulty might bring in its wake, and he was willing to render moderate services for the alliance.¹ But in the end he found himself carried far beyond his first intentions, so far indeed as to send his troops, 23,000 strong, on an expensive campaign in the north, remote from his territories. Whatever the idealistic purpose with which the "crusade" had begun, it soon became evident that in every major step Austria was impelled by a more realistic motive: the necessity of maintaining her prestige in Germany against the energetic competition of Prussia. Austria followed her rival to Denmark "more to keep watch of her than to give her assistance."²

At the outset, Rechberg had wanted a postponement of the "federal execution" decreed by the Frankfurt Diet against Denmark, in order to give the new king time to rally the forces of conciliation, and to withdraw the offensive constitution

¹For this chapter, in addition to the well-known works, see Friedrich Frahm: "Die Bismarcksche Lösung der schleswig-holsteinischen Frage," in *Zeitschrift der Gesellschaft für schleswig-holsteinische Geschichte* LIX, 1930, pp. 335-431, especially pp. 359-416; and above all, Lawrence D. Steefel: *The Schleswig-Holstein Question*, chapters iii, v, and vi, and appendices of documents from the Austrian, British, Danish, and Prussian archives. See also the following document collections from this point on: *Les Origines diplomatiques de la guerre de 1870-1871*; *Bismarck, Die gesammelten Werke* IV and V edited by Friedrich Thimme; *Bismarck und die nordschleswigsche Frage 1864-1879* edited by Walter Platzhoff; *Ursprung und Geschichte des Artikels V des Prager Friedens* edited by Fritz Hähnsen; *Vor fünfzig Jahren. Briefwechsel zwischen Dr. Karl Lorentzen und den Führern der Augustenburgerischen Partei, 1863-1866* edited by Dr. Kupke.

²*Origines* I, p. 333.

which they feared would incorporate Schleswig, largely German, into the Danish monarchy.³ Failing in this hope, Rechberg had suggested that Prussia send the few troops necessary and spare Austria the inconvenience.⁴ But it soon appeared that the Danes could not be frightened by an occupation merely of Holstein. And every day the national feeling of the Germans increased in warmth. All possible pressure was brought to bear on the two German powers to take the lead in the great national movement to free their brothers in the north from the foreign yoke.

The Danish stubbornness and the popular enthusiasm put a different complexion on the matter for Austria. Franz Joseph, first of German princes, could not stand aside and see the rights of Germans trampled under foot by the Danes, while Prussia went to their rescue.⁵ But Rechberg did not visualize a very bold policy, in view of Austria's precarious situation. There would be no material gain for her in the north, no territory to annex; she must maintain her position in the eyes of Germany, but would endeavor to do so with the smallest possible expenditure. Hence Rechberg left no stone unturned to avert a crisis. He urged moderation upon the Danish government through its envoy in Vienna, and later suggested that France exert pressure in Copenhagen.⁶ When events tended toward a breach in December, he even ventured to suggest that Napoleon call a conference for the peaceful settlement of the dispute, and at almost every interview with the

³ The King of Denmark was recognized by the powers, but not by the German Confederation, as sovereign Duke of Schleswig-Holstein, which enjoyed a measure of autonomy. The new constitution, which would become law on January 1, 1864, not only broke the cherished tradition of the indivisibility of the Duchies, but was held to be a violation of the agreements made with Prussia and Austria in 1851 and 1852 by the present king's predecessor.

⁴ Sybel III, p. 119. The Diet had commissioned Hanover and Saxony to send troops into Holstein. Prussia and Austria were to hold other troops in readiness in case of active Danish resistance (Stern IX, p. 336).

⁵ Friedjung I, p. 74.

⁶ Friedjung I, p. 74. *Origines* I, DD. 208, 247.

French ambassador thereafter, he raised the subject anew.⁷

Quite naturally, the real leadership of the Austro-Prussian combination fell to the state on whose northern borders the disaffected Duchies lay, and no one was better fitted to assume this leadership than Prussia's minister-president. With consummate skill, Bismarck exhausted all the arts of diplomacy to drag Austria farther and farther into the enterprise. At the very outset he had seen that the only course by which to secure this and to prevent foreign intervention was to uphold the London protocol of 1852; but at the same time, he insisted that the Danish king must fulfil the agreements which had preceded it.⁸ If the Danes promulgated the new constitution for Schleswig on January 1, 1864, as they declared they would do, then Denmark's bad faith was patent, Bismarck argued, and the two German powers ought to take strong action. Rechberg could not deny the justice of the argument, but advocated moderate measures.⁹ Austria was inevitably drawn into Prussia's wake, and the hostility of the other German states helped to keep her there.

The petty governments of the "third Germany" had been swept along with the popular tide which demanded the freeing of the Duchies and the creation of a new German state under the Prince of Augustenburg. No sharper contrast to Austrian desires can be imagined than this program, for the smaller states violently attacked the London protocol, and invoked the principle of nationality, which Austria abhorred. A few of the more extreme states introduced motions which, if passed, would place the two powers before the disagreeable

⁷ *Origines* I, pp. 17, 57; 81, 127, 208, 287; II, pp. 24, etc.

⁸ The London protocol of 1852, signed by all the great powers, but not by the German Confederation, guaranteed the territorial integrity of the Danish monarchy, including Schleswig-Holstein, and secured the succession to Christian of Glücksburg. By the agreements of 1851-52, the King of Denmark had promised to Prussia and Austria that he would maintain the special status of the Duchies and would respect the rights and privileges of the German-speaking inhabitants.

⁹ Sybel III, pp. 128-129.

alternative of disobeying a formal resolution of the Diet,¹⁰ or of courting a general European war. Only by exerting the greatest pressure, were these motions defeated. Rechberg's anger knew no bounds: "Never could Austria be expected to submit to a pack of little states," he said,¹¹ and in a letter to Prince Alexander of Hesse he wrote these astonishing words:

"The demand for the conquest of Schleswig for Germany, which is now so prevalent that it seems even to be catching hold of governments otherwise prudent, differs in no way from the striving of the French people for the Rhine frontier."¹²

As expected and feared, the Danes on the first of January flung their gauntlet in the face of Germany, by promulgating the constitution for Schleswig. The time had come for action, and Bismarck decided to make the most of the estrangement between Austria and the Confederation. Three days before, Prussia and Austria had introduced a motion calling upon the Diet to occupy Schleswig as a temporary pledge to bring pressure on Denmark. The motion was scheduled for a vote on January 14. Meanwhile Bismarck proposed to Rechberg that if this should be rejected by the Diet, Prussia and Austria should carry out the action alone, in their capacity as European powers. To guard against Austrian inconstancy, he asked for a binding declaration.¹³

The suggestion fell on favorable ground, for Rechberg wanted to bind Prussia as well. He knew that King William was much more in sympathy with the national phase of the question than with the preservation of the treaty of London; he knew that Bismarck would not uphold that treaty any longer than necessary to satisfy the foreign powers. Bismarck's latest proposal however still clung to it, and Rechberg seized

¹⁰ Such disobedience, if it did not at once disrupt the Confederation, would certainly lead to its destruction by nullifying its rules. Prussia might have welcomed this result, but nothing could have been more detrimental to Austria.

¹¹ Sybel III, p. 134.

¹² Stern IX, p. 348.

¹³ January 5, 1864 (Sybel III, p. 153; G. W. IV, pp. 265-268).

the occasion to set this down in black and white. With the help of Baron Biegeleben, he drafted an agreement providing for an ultimatum to Denmark, the occupation of Schleswig with or without the Diet's cooperation, and the suppression of all propaganda for Augustenburg in the invaded Duchy. The core of the compact was article 5, by which Austria and Prussia reserved the right to propose in common other conditions than those of the agreements of 1851-52, *but in no case would they give up the integrity of Denmark nor the recognition of Christian's succession except by mutual agreement.*

On January 10, the foreign minister and his adviser submitted their draft for approval at a cabinet council presided over by the Emperor.¹⁴ After a few introductory remarks by Franz Joseph, Biegeleben gave an *exposé* of the agreement, concluding that Austria and Prussia would carry out the seizure of Schleswig even in the face of a European war. Rechberg hastened to tone down this statement, adding that Austria's task was rather to prevent such a war at all costs. That had been the purpose of her motion in the Diet, he said, and it was likewise the aim of the present instrument, which had been put in binding form, so that Austria would not be left in the lurch in case a new ministry, favorable to the small states, should replace that of Bismarck in Berlin.¹⁵ If the Confederation, he continued, attempted to occupy Schleswig and set up their candidate contrary to all right, the foreign guaranteeing powers would be impelled to intervene. Then if Austria submitted to the resolution of the Diet, she would not only lose all her foreign allies, but France would welcome the chance to attack Germany and raise revolutions in Italy, Galicia, and Hungary. The very existence of the monarchy was thus threatened! In the discussion which ensued, it was evident that the fear of being drawn into a dangerous situation by

¹⁴ The following from the protocol of the minister council of January 10, 1864.

¹⁵ *Ibid.* This eventuality was by no means chimerical, in view of William's outspoken Augustenburg sympathies, and the strength of the Prince's party at the Prussian court.

precipitate action of the Diet prevailed among the ministers. The way out of the impasse, Franz Joseph himself indicated: everything depended, he said, upon occupying Schleswig as quickly as possible without giving the smaller states time to take part. Once the Danes had offered resistance, the situation in Germany would clear up in Austria's favor.

Of all the ministers present, the most far-sighted was Lasser,¹⁶ who alone visualized the possibility (later to become a reality) that in the course of the struggle the principle of Denmark's territorial integrity might be abandoned. In such a case, what was the objective at which Austria would aim unswervingly in all circumstances, he asked? Somewhat impatiently, Rechberg replied that it was impossible to take account of every eventuality without endangering the rapid conclusion of the agreement. To this Count Esterhazy and others nodded their approval. In another connection Biegeleben made the characteristic remark that it was very necessary to bind Prussia by a compact, so that she could not give way to her "lust for the annexation of Schleswig and Holstein." Strange to say, no one, not even Schmerling, voiced a doubt that Prussia might refuse to place her head in the noose. The *Staatsminister*, whose influence had diminished as the smaller states had dropped away from Austria's skirts, declared his agreement with every clause, and asked only that certain phrases be altered for precision and to place more emphasis on Austria's action as a *German* power,—to which Rechberg readily assented. Finally, when all present had agreed to the draft, Schmerling proposed its eventual publication, and with the Emperor's recommendation that it be printed in the official Vienna Gazette and announced to the Diet when the Austrian motion came to a vote, the council was brought to a close.¹⁷

¹⁶ Ritter von Lasser, minister without portfolio at this time, and Schmerling's chief "aide." He possessed great knowledge of departmental administration and a tremendous capacity for work, but appears to have accepted bribes (Fröbel: *Ein Lebenslauf* II, p. 356).

¹⁷ This intention of Franz Joseph and Schmerling to publish the agreement with Prussia as soon as concluded has not before been disclosed. Later, the

The decision was therefore to rush through the alliance with Prussia for the double purpose of checkmating the Diet and of nipping Prussian ambitions in the bud. The goal of the action in Schleswig was the restoration of the status of 1851-52 or of something better, within the bounds of the London protocol. In truth, Rechberg's own objective was an amalgamation of Schleswig and Holstein, and a "personal union"¹⁸ of the new state with Denmark, under the guarantee of the powers.¹⁹

How different, on the other hand, was Bismarck's ultimate goal! As the result of stubborn Danish resistance,²⁰ he expected to administer to the little northern kingdom such a defeat that the Germans could plausibly demand the cession of the Duchies as reward for the blood and resources expended. Then, later, by some manoeuvre or other, he might accomplish their annexation to Prussia, or at least their dependence upon her, with or without the consent of Austria.²¹ Thus the suspicions of Biegeleben and others in Vienna were not idle fancies.

The full extent of these plans Bismarck naturally did not divulge, for even King William recoiled with a blush from the annexation idea.²² In the interest of Germany William wanted to free the Duchies and set up the Prince of Augustenburg with guarantees for a conservative government. His eagerness for the abandonment of the London treaty cost Bismarck many a worried hour at this time, for the latter was wise

Prussian amendment of article 5 made its publication undesirable to both parties. Franz Joseph seemingly expected Prussia to accept the agreement without demur.

¹⁸ i. e. more or less complete autonomy.

¹⁹ *Origines* I, p. 331.

²⁰ Bismarck probably encouraged this resistance (Vogt: *Die Hessische Politik in der Zeit der Reichsgründung* p. 212; Marcks: *Otto von Bismarck* p. 81; Steefel pp. 360-362).

²¹ Bismarck: *Gedanken und Erinnerungen* II, pp. 24-25 (corrected by Stern IX, p. 341 note 1, and by Steefel p. 108 note); Friedjung I, p. 77. Stern IX, p. 586 gives Bismarck's words in the council of February 3, 1864.

²² Steefel p. 108.

enough to see that the fiction of the treaty must still be upheld to keep Austria in tow. With Austria behind him he felt reasonably safe against the rest of Europe. But he did not want to bind Prussia to uphold Denmark's integrity, as the Austrian draft agreement now proposed. To keep to a middle course, he played off the King against Austria, drew concessions from each, and led them both on to the path of temporary, not permanent, adherence to the London protocol.²³

The King was brought into line in the meetings of the crown council on January 2 and 3.²⁴ It was now Bismarck's task to persuade Austria. When Karolyi presented the draft treaty on January 12 Bismarck assumed his most friendly tone.²⁵ For himself, he said, he would be perfectly willing to sign the agreement as it stood, but he was afraid the King might object to the limitation imposed by article 5.²⁶ Karolyi replied, that Austria laid the greatest weight upon this very article, and that the King's refusal to accept the heart of a real alliance would surely awaken mistrust in Austria, and perhaps spoil the entire work of *rapprochement*. "You are preaching to a convert," answered Bismarck, and he promised to do his best to overcome William's objections. Not satisfied with this assurance, however, Karolyi that evening wrote a letter for Bismarck to show to the King, in which he stated the Austrian position, and concluded with a warning against calling down a general war as the result of a breach of Austro-Prussian solidarity.²⁷

Two days later, on January 14, Bismarck reported to Kar-

²³ Steefel p. 105 ff.

²⁴ Sternfeld: "Der Preussische Kronrat vom 2/3 Jan. 1864," in *Historische Zeitschrift* CXXI, 1925, Heft 1, pp. 72-80, publishes the protocols of these meetings in full; Stern IX, pp. 582-584, the same in excerpt; Steefel used them also.

²⁵ Karolyi believed Bismarck's friendship for Austria at this time was sincere, because he needed Austria to draw the King away from Augustenburg (Karolyi to Rechberg, January 4, 1864, No. 3).

²⁶ Karolyi to Rechberg, January 14, 1864, No. 6A.

²⁷ Karolyi to Bismarck, January 12, 1864. Copy annexed. Cf. Sybel III, p. 156.

olyi that his fears concerning William's attitude had been realized. "To help the King over the mountain," he said, a less restrictive form of article 5 must be found. Without further protest, Karolyi sketched out with Bismarck several new versions, and they finally agreed on a formula by which Austria and Prussia bound themselves not to settle the future status of the Duchies, nor the question of the succession, except by mutual agreement.²⁸ By this, the obligation of mutual solidarity was carried a step farther than in the Austrian version,²⁹ but by omitting all mention of the London protocol, as Karolyi wrote in sending the new draft to Rechberg, "the point of departure of the alliance, the basis of the coming action in Schleswig is left entirely in the dark."³⁰

Much depended on the decision of Franz Joseph, and the decision had to be made quickly. Bismarck pressed Austria not to suggest new changes which would run into greater difficulty with William and cause loss of precious time.³¹ The moment was a critical one, for the German powers, upon the Diet's rejection of their motion for the occupation of Schleswig, had declared amid general excitement that they would proceed alone to seize that Duchy, in their capacity of European powers. Austria had thrown in her lot with Prussia, and hesi-

²⁸ Article 5 read: "In case hostilities arise in Schleswig and in consequence, the existing treaties between the German powers and Denmark become null and void, the courts of Austria and Prussia reserve the right to settle the future status of the Duchies only by mutual agreement [nur in gegenseitigem Einverständnisse festzustellen]. To attain this agreement they shall at the proper time discuss further necessary measures. In any case they shall not decide the question of the succession except by common agreement. [Sie werden jedesfalls die Frage über die Erbfolge nicht anders als in gemeinsamem Einverständniss entscheiden]." Sybel III, p. 156.

²⁹ i. e., to the stage after the rejection of Denmark's territorial integrity, which had been wholly unprovided for in the Austrian draft of article 5, as minister von Lasser had remarked in council of January 10.

³⁰ Karolyi to Rechberg, January 14, 1864, No. 6A. I find no indication that Karolyi "recommended" the acceptance of the amendment, as Sybel states, III, p. 156. He simply reported the facts without comment, but the tone of the passage here quoted would indicate his doubt as to the efficacy of the change.

³¹ Karolyi to Rechberg, January 16, 1864, lg. 12.28 a. m.

tation at this very moment might be fatal. The Emperor and Rechberg accepted Bismarck's terms, and Karolyi was authorized to sign the protocol in the form that Prussia wished.³²

Already the day before, a Prusso-Austrian ultimatum had been sent to Denmark, demanding a withdrawal of the new constitution within forty-eight hours. This was refused by Denmark. The two powers then completed their military preparations, and on February 1 their troops entered Schleswig. The war had begun.

* * * * *

For good or ill, Austria had left the surer ground of the London protocol and adopted that of a "mutual agreement" with Prussia. This slight change later cost Austria her position in Germany, for through that small opening entered the war of 1866. The danger of course arose from the fact that the two rivals might not be able to agree upon the ultimate fate of the Duchies, and that nothing but the force of arms could compel a decision.

As Rechberg later recognized, the fatal outcome might possibly have been prevented by stipulating in the treaty itself the future disposition of the Duchies, in case the Personal Union should prove unattainable.³³ It is possible that Austria could successfully have insisted on the inclusion of a clause binding each power not to take any territory for itself alone, and declaring that, if the Duchies should be taken away from Denmark, they would be united under the Prince of Augusten-

³² The agreement, in the form of a protocol, was signed at Berlin shortly after 12.30 noon on January 17 (Karolyi to Rechberg, January 17, 1864, tg. 2.55 p. m., and dispatch No. 8A). The protocol itself was dated January 16, to correspond with the Prusso-Austrian ultimatum. This fact has doubtless misled Sybel (III, p. 158) and all others, except Steefel, as to the correct date. Stern (IX, p. 351) has the "treaty" signed in Vienna on January 16. The protocol is printed in full by Friedrich Count Revertera: "Rechberg und Bismarck 1863 bis 1864," in *Deutsche Revue* XXVIII, 1903, Heft 4, pp. 2-4.

³³ In interviews with Friedjung (1890 ff.), Rechberg said, "Es ist richtig, dass wir vor dem Feldzuge nicht bestimmt genug mit Preussen verabredeten, was nach der Eroberung mit den Herzogthümern werden sollte. Das kam daher, weil sich die Verhältnisse rascher entwickelten, als ich wünschte." (Friedjung II, p. 587).

burg and joined to the Confederation. The Prince could be forced to accept a conservative constitution and advisers, and certain privileges might be conceded to Prussia. The King's warmest wishes would thus have been satisfied, and the ground would have been cut from under Bismarck's feet. This solution was proposed by Austria only a few months later, but failed then because the idea of Prussian annexation had made too great progress in the King's mind and among the public. But in January the King hardly dared harbor the thought of annexing the Duchies. The inclusion of a self-denying clause at this time might therefore have eliminated the Schleswig-Holstein question as a future *casus belli* for Bismarck.

Many years later, Rechberg explained his hasty misstep thus: Bismarck had threatened to go ahead without Austria and free the Duchies alone, leaving Austria dishonored in the eyes of Germany.³⁴ But Rechberg's memory deceived him. In May and June 1864, and possibly even in February, Bismarck did utter such a threat, but in January his tactics were quite the opposite. He kept repeating to Karolyi that the King was devoted to the alliance with Austria, and could not think of an alliance with the German states and France, on which he would have to depend if Austria backed out.³⁵ Such an act is entirely out of the question, was Bismarck's emphatic declaration.³⁶

No one but Freiherr von Lasser in the Austrian cabinet was

³⁴ Friedjung: *Kampf* I, p. 79.

³⁵ In Bismarck's note of January 5 to Austria, he declared outright: "Jede Aktion sei für uns an die Voraussetzung geknüpft, dass Oesterreich mit uns völlig einverstanden ist." (Sybel III, p. 153). To Karolyi, Bismarck said: "Ein Umschwung, welcher darin bestünde, dass der König sich vom Londoner Vertrag gegen Oesterreich lossagen wolle, um gemeinsame Sache mit der deutsch-nationalen Richtung zu machen, mit gleichzeitiger Anlehnung an Frankreich . . . sei nun und nimmermehr zu befürchten. Bei der Idiosynkratie, welche den König gegen eine Allianz mit Frankreich erfülle, könne er mir dafür stehen, dass eine derartige Constellation als unbedingt ausgeschlossen anzusehen sei." (Karolyi to Rechberg, January 14, No. 6A). Further: "Der König wünscht ohne Zweifel, sich die Allianz mit Oesterreich zu sichern. . . ." (Karolyi to Rechberg, January 14, No. 6B).

³⁶ Karolyi to Rechberg, January 14, No. 6A.

as far-sighted as Bismarck. But Rechberg and Franz Joseph were too paralyzed with fear of a French intervention to perceive that Bismarck needed them at this time more than they needed him, and that they might have stolen the King away from the policy of his minister-president. For one thing, Karolyi himself did not grasp the exact position nor ultimate policy of Bismarck. Then, too, events moved too rapidly for the Austrians. After the proud declaration in the Diet on January 14, they considered it a matter of prestige as well as of protection, not to delay a complete understanding by haggling over possibilities of a distant contingency which might not arise.³⁷ In the last analysis, if it came to a war with Prussia—an improbable contingency—the Emperor believed that Austria could defend her own interests fully as well as Prussia.³⁸ These considerations, added to the knowledge that France was encouraging the opposition of the small states,³⁹ swung the balance in favor of the Prussian version. "Fear of revolution . . . drove Austria to intervene in the North," wrote one of England's envoys, "and fear of Prussia reaping all the advantages of the affair made her keep on."⁴⁰ "Austria is working for the King of Prussia," said Bismarck significantly to the Italian envoy.⁴¹

* * * * *

Meanwhile Austrian public opinion had turned against the war. The wave of enthusiasm of the previous November soon ebbed, and the Viennese lost interest in events which took place so far away. "All is quiet, perfectly quiet," wrote Gramont, the French ambassador, at the beginning of January, "or if people's minds are really agitated, it is impossible to

³⁷ Sybel III, p. 158. Cf. Rechberg's words in council of January 10, 1864 (Protocol in HHS).

³⁸ Franz Joseph to Albert of Saxony, letter of February 16, 1864 (Otto Ernst: *Franz Joseph I. in seinen Briefen* p. 160).

³⁹ Sybel III, p. 157, with wrong date for the French circular of January 4 (Cf. *Origines* I, pp. 85-88).

⁴⁰ Steefel: *The Schleswig-Holstein Question* (Harvard thesis 1923, in typed manuscript) p. 76.

⁴¹ *Origines* I, p. 233.

discover the least outward sign of it.”⁴² But when the government began to send large forces to assist Prussia in Schleswig, popular opposition made itself heard. Rechberg’s policy underwent the heaviest attacks in the *Reichsrat*, where the prevailing sentiment favored cooperation with the Diet instead of with the reactionary government of Bismarck, and appropriations for the “execution” in Holstein were cut almost in half.⁴³

Rechberg defended his policy vigorously. To quiet rumors of a split in the cabinet, Schmerling spoke in support of the Prussian alliance and tried to calm the house with the assurance that it would have no effect on the constitutional regime in Austria.⁴⁴ The *Staatsminister* could not refrain from adding, however, that Austria would return as soon as possible to the “reform” policy and friendship with the Confederation.

It must not be supposed that Rechberg and Franz Joseph were themselves enthusiastic over the sacrifices of the campaign. Expenditures were soon mounting too high for the comparatively restricted aim in view.⁴⁵ When the troops reached the northern border of Schleswig, the Kaiser called a halt, for the treaty with Prussia did not include any campaign beyond the borders of the Duchy. But the Danes were as defiant as ever, and Bismarck did not intend to stop until they had been thoroughly beaten. For this, according to the Prussian military authorities, an invasion of Jutland was necessary. General Manteuffel was dispatched in all haste to Vienna, where in spite of mistrust and indifference in many circles, he succeeded after a week of effort in persuading the Emperor to sign a further agreement.⁴⁶ Hints of future aid to Austria against

⁴² *Origines* I, p. 78.

⁴³ *Stern* IX, p. 354.

⁴⁴ Schmerling probably expected a free hand in internal policy if he supported Rechberg’s foreign policy (*Friedjung* I, p. 80).

⁴⁵ *Origines* I, p. 333.

⁴⁶ Approved in Austrian minister council, March 2, and signed in Berlin, March 5. Karolyi had reported the possibility that if Austria held back, King William might continue the campaign into Jutland alone (Karolyi to Rechberg, February 21, tg.).

Italy probably turned the scales in favor of further action.⁴⁷

By this new compromise, Austria admitted that the treaty of London had lapsed, and agreed to carry the war into Denmark proper. Prussia on her part conceded to Rechberg the promise to propose at an eventual conference of the powers, the Personal Union of the Duchies under the Danish Crown. Thus Prussia obtained the substance and Austria the shadow, for if Personal Union should be rejected by the Danes, Prussia would no longer be obliged to favor it. Again Austria let slip a favorable moment for settling the fate of the Duchies in her own interest.⁴⁸ In the cabinet council called to approve the new agreement, one of the ministers raised this very question. But Franz Joseph summarily dismissed the idea with the remark, that this was no time to seek a settlement with Prussia, which might easily lead to unpleasant and certainly untimely controversies.⁴⁹ Schmerling and the rest accepted the imperial dictum without a word.⁵⁰

During March and April the combined armies pressed to the very tip of Jutland, stormed the intrenchment of Düppel, and drove the Danes on to their islands of Alsen and Fünen. Meanwhile the ceaseless efforts of the English government had finally secured the general acceptance of a conference to meet at London to regulate the German-Danish quarrel. In order to induce the German Confederation to send a delegate, the invitation avoided all mention of the London protocol as the basis of the Conference. Bismarck succeeded in delaying the opening until the allies had won the victory of Düppel, which strengthened their diplomatic position.

⁴⁷ *G. W. IV*, p. 335.

⁴⁸ On February 22 Bismarck telegraphed to Manteuffel in Vienna, that it was more important than ever to reach an agreement with Austria, in view of France's attitude, and "that the chances of separate action by Prussia are not very favorable." (*G. W. IV*, p. 335). Unfortunately for Austria, her telegraph bureau does not appear to have intercepted and decoded this message.

⁴⁹ Protocol of minister council of March 2, 1864.

⁵⁰ Schmerling must therefore bear his part of the responsibility for the later unfortunate turn of events, of which he tried to clear himself in a statement to the Vienna press before the war of 1866 (*Friedjung I*, p. 80).

As Austria was the more passive partner in the Danish campaign, so her envoys⁵¹ at the Conference limited themselves largely to assenting to declarations given in the name of the allies by the Prussian delegates.⁵² Bismarck had assured himself of French sympathy and support by secret exchanges with France, which were assiduously kept from Austria's knowledge. England and Russia, on the other hand, sponsored the cause of the Danes. But a fortnight after the conferences had begun, the neutral powers gave in under protest to the view of the Germans that the agreements of 1851-52 had lapsed. This was the end of the London treaty.

In accordance with the March agreement, Prussia now joined Austria in proposing the political independence of the combined Duchies, avoiding the appellation "Personal Union" which Rechberg feared would make a bad impression in Germany.⁵³ But Bismarck had secretly instructed Bernstorff to handle the proposal in such a way "that it will not be accepted, but also will not seem to miscarry through our opposition."⁵⁴ This injunction proved unnecessary, for the Danes utterly refused to consider the proposition or even to transmit it to their government.⁵⁵ After futile discussion the Conference adjourned for eleven days to allow the delegates time to consult their governments and formulate new proposals.⁵⁶

The death knell of Personal Union had rung, and Rechberg as yet had given no indication that he held any alternative plan in reserve. Nor had he permitted himself to discuss with Prussia the eventual fate of the Duchies. In vain Bismarck

⁵¹ Count Apponyi, Austrian ambassador in London, and Hofrat von Biegeleben.

⁵² *Origines* III, p. 17. Franz Joseph had personally instructed Biegeleben to cooperate intimately with Prussia at the conference and in all other political questions (*G. W.* IV, p. 387, editor's note to No. 336).

⁵³ Sybel III, p. 234.

⁵⁴ Sybel III, p. 233; *G. W.* IV, p. 428.

⁵⁵ Rechberg blamed Apponyi and Biegeleben for the failure of the Personal Union proposal (*Engel-Janosi: Graf Rechberg* p. 148 f.).

⁵⁶ Protocol of the session of May 17 (*Das Staatsarchiv* VII, pp. 16-23); Beust's report to the Diet (*Aus drei Vierteljahrhunderten* I, pp. 380-383).

had tried to tempt him into approving Prussian annexation, by dangling the hope of political compensations for Austria, concessions by Prussia toward federal reform, "Yes, a guarantee of Austria's entire territory."⁵⁷ Failing that, Bismarck had tried to interest him in the candidacy of the Grand Duke of Oldenburg, whose conservative principles stood in marked contrast to those of the democratic Augustenburg. The latter, said Bismarck, would never have the support of Prussia so long as he (Bismarck) guided the ship of state.⁵⁸ He carefully refrained from mentioning a tentative understanding with Napoleon which included the Augustenburg candidacy or a Prussian annexation by vote of the population:⁵⁹ a program to make Rechberg shudder, as Bismarck well knew. Nor did he give any inkling that King William was in secret correspondence with the Prince, with the object of securing the promise of concessions which would make the new state a dependency of Prussia.⁶⁰

Though without definite knowledge of these manoeuvres, the Austrian cabinet, always suspicious of Prussia's intentions, had become "thoroughly alarmed at the growth of annexation sentiment in Prussia, which had followed the capture of Düppel."⁶¹ This sentiment had been fostered by the newspapers inspired by Bismarck. Even the pro-Augustenburg press demanded advantages for Prussia which would make the Prince a Prussian vassal.⁶² A petition for the annexation of the Duchies, started by an ex-minister of the Crown and circulated

⁵⁷ Chotek to Rechberg, letter of May 15, 1864 (Steeffel pp. 323-324). Less positive hints had been dropped much earlier (Karolyi to Rechberg, January 14, 1864, No. 6B; printed by Steefel as "No. 6N," pp. 311-314).

⁵⁸ Karolyi to Rechberg, March 26, No. 37A.

⁵⁹ Sybel III, p. 222 ff.

⁶⁰ Jansen-Samwer p. 320 ff.; Gebauer: *Herzog Friedrich VIII von Schleswig-Holstein* p. 90 ff. Samwer, the Prince's chief "minister" denied the existence of such a correspondence, when questioned by Wydenbrugk, the envoy in Vienna, and there is no evidence that Vienna knew of these negotiations with William, at the time (Jansen-Samwer p. 333 note 1). Sybel does not mention these exchanges.

⁶¹ Steefel p. 232.

⁶² *Origines* III, p. 20.

partly by officials, obtained 30,000 signatures in a few days.⁶³ When the Austrian chargé drew Bismarck's attention to this petition, the latter replied that an official note of censure would only encourage the Danes to raise their demands.⁶⁴ The chargé's protest against a policy which took on more and more of a "conspiring aspect," expressed the feelings of the Austrian press, public, and government.

Popular opinion in Vienna cried out more loudly than ever against Rechberg's pro-Prussian complaisance, and pressed the government to seat Augustenburg as independent Duke of Schleswig-Holstein, even at the cost of a breach with Prussia. This wave of resentment Schmerling turned to account to secure a revival of his influence upon the Emperor and a *rapprochement* with the German states.⁶⁵

THE ADOPTION OF AUGUSTENBURG

Confronted with opposition from within and without, Rechberg began to waver. On May 16, the day before Personal Union failed in the London Conference, he betrayed the first sign of weakening toward Augustenburg.⁶⁶ Three days later, the French ambassador found him in a different frame of mind, still hoping that the integrity of Denmark could be saved, but allowing his fancy to dwell upon the candidacies of Oldenburg and the Prince of Hesse to counteract Augustenburg. "But in the last analysis," wrote the Duke of Gramont, "the Vienna cabinet wants to arrive as soon as possible at a definite peace, and will support anything but a Prussian annexation, real or disguised."⁶⁷

The ideas of Rechberg were still in a state of flux when on May 22 the final dispatches from London on the session of

⁶³ Stern IX, p. 374.

⁶⁴ Chotek to Rechberg, May 15, No. 50E.

⁶⁵ Friedjung I, p. 93.

⁶⁶ He gave to Gramont a half-hearted assent to the French program in case Personal Union should be defeated. This program, as Gramont presented it, called for a division of Schleswig and the creation of a new German state of Schleswig-Holstein under the sovereignty of a Prince (neither Prussian nor Oldenburg) acceptable to the inhabitants (*Origines* III, pp. 45-46).

⁶⁷ *Origines* III, pp. 63-64.

May 17 arrived in Vienna. They showed at last the full extent of the defeat for Personal Union. Russia herself had hinted her willingness to cease defending Denmark's integrity.⁶⁸ England was ready to go still farther.⁶⁹ In a private conversation with Biegeleben just before the general conference, Lord Clarendon had launched into a violent indictment of Austria's policy which (he said) had brought things to the present impasse.⁷⁰ After an equally spirited defense by Biegeleben, the British minister's wrath turned against Prussia. "All England," he cried, "would rather see the left bank of the Rhine, except for Belgium, fall into Napoleon's hands, than Schleswig-Holstein into Prussia's." Personal Union, he continued was no real solution. He and his colleagues could arrive at no other conclusion than to make use of the Augustenburg family to build a new state out of Holstein and part of Schleswig, and to preserve for the remainder of Denmark the possibility of an unchallenged national existence.⁷¹ There was

⁶⁸ *Origines* III, p. 40.

⁶⁹ On May 16, Bernstorff had received a note from Lord Russell, offering to consider any proposal consistent with Denmark's security and a lasting peace. The English cabinet, it was later learned, had decided to abandon the integrity of Denmark (Apponyi to Rechberg, May 19, 1864, No. 50B).

⁷⁰ Clarendon blamed Austria for being dragged along by Prussia. She should either have gone with Denmark or with the German popular movement, he said. Biegeleben easily defended Austria's actions on the grounds of resistance to nationalistic tendencies and upholding of monarchical principles. The entire conversation reported in Apponyi to Rechberg, May 19, 1864, No. 50C *Reservirt* (Steeffel pp. 334-337). Though sent in the name of both Austrian envoys, practically all the reports from the conference were written by Biegeleben—the present report almost certainly was.

⁷¹ This was in harmony with the French program above mentioned, though neither Clarendon nor Biegeleben gave evidence of any connection between the two. The account of this interview in Vogt p. 30 and note 1, differs somewhat in important details from that in Biegeleben's report, and gives additional details. Possibly their source may have been in private letters from Biegeleben or Apponyi which have not come to light. Vogt's account in general is based on reports from Gagern, envoy of Hesse-Darmstadt in Vienna, to his chief, Dalwigk. Gagern's brother, Max, was one of the influential councillors in the Austrian foreign office. Gagern was also one source for similar information in Fröbel: *Ein Lebenslauf* II, p. 306. Cf. also *Die Tagebücher des Freiherrn Reinhard von Dalwigk zu Lichtenfels* p. 139; Jansen-Samwer p. 315.

much in this suggestion to arouse Austrian sympathies. In describing the situation to his chief, Biegeleben concluded that the time had come to take a new course, and the only solution which might preserve peace, since it had the support of the neutrals, was to divide Schleswig and erect a new state with a dynasty of its own. Far from enthusiastic, Biegeleben nevertheless considered it the only plan the Danes might be induced to accept. For that reason he presented it to Vienna in spite of a certain fear that in the long run it might create dangers for the peace of Germany and Europe.⁷²

These important dispatches reached Rechberg's desk on the morning of May 22. At noon he conferred with Schmerling and afterward with his advisers, other ministers,⁷³ and presumably with the Emperor. Convinced at last that Personal Union was no longer possible, and disillusioned as to Bismarck's loyalty, Rechberg accepted the suggestions of Clarendon and Biegeleben, long advocated by the Vienna press. At once new instructions were drafted for Berlin and London, and the Vienna statesmen "felt as if a mountain had been lifted from their shoulders."⁷⁴

A settlement of the vexed Duchies question by which Augusten-
burg would be installed as independent sovereign offered too many advantages to Austria to be dismissed. The wonder is that they had not been recognized months earlier. The favor of the German states and the support of popular opinion throughout Germany would be regained at one stroke, Prussian annexation could be nipped in the bud, and the much-

⁷² Apponyi and Biegeleben to Rechberg, May 19, 1864, No. 50B; Biegeleben to Rechberg, letter of May 19 (Steeffel p. 341 f.), suggesting the formula for the change of Austrian policy.

⁷³ Fröbel II, p. 306.

⁷⁴ Fröbel II, p. 306. Unconscious of the impending change in his favor, the Prince had become so discouraged over his prospects that his chief adviser, Samwer, had written to his Vienna representative, Wydenbrugg, on May 18, that if worst came to worst the Prince would not actively oppose a Prussian annexation, for then at least the chief object—the freeing of the Duchies from Denmark—would have been accomplished. Wydenbrugg undoubtedly made this known to the *Ballplatz*. Hence Gebauer (pp. 104-105) thinks it stirred Rechberg to action for the Prince.

dreaded plebiscite in the Duchies avoided.⁷⁵ The incomplete legal claims of the Prince, on which the *Ballplatz* had previously harped, were now to be passed over in silence, and emphasis placed on the *political* advantages of his candidacy and its greater practicability.⁷⁶ The Prince's democratic tendencies, to which Rechberg and Franz Joseph had strongly objected, were not mentioned in the council, perhaps because the day before Rechberg had written to Karolyi to urge Bismarck "without delay and inconspicuously to send a suitable trustworthy person to the Prince, to enlighten him in this sense and bind him to an attitude more in keeping with his own best interests."⁷⁷ Finally, it was thought that Prussia would be forced to consent to the Augustenburg proposal through fear of being outdistanced by Austria in the favor of Germany.

Meanwhile the Prince could be secretly warned not to promise away his sovereign rights to Berlin. On May 26, Rechberg informed Wydenbrugk, the Augustenburg agent in Vienna, that Austria was ready to support the Prince's candidacy, and bade him go post-haste to Kiel to prevent Frederick from making too many concessions to Prussia.⁷⁸ This natural if somewhat disloyal expedient, which later proved impolitic as well, was imitated by Beust at the same time.⁷⁹

Before the Austrian instructions had been sent off to London and Berlin Werther called to communicate two dispatches from Bismarck.⁸⁰ The aim of these notes was to secure an unequivocal declaration from Austria as to her plans for the future status of the Duchies. Bismarck did not contemplate offering a proposal in the next meeting of the Conference. He preferred to leave the initiative as yet to the neutral powers.

⁷⁵ On May 25, Rechberg presented the new policy before the council of ministers (See the protocol in Appendix A, No. 2).

⁷⁶ Protocol of council of May 25 (*Ibid.*).

⁷⁷ Rechberg to Karolyi, May 24, 1864. Cf. Rechberg's words to Werther (Sybel III, p. 244).

⁷⁸ Jansen-Samwer p. 332.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

⁸⁰ G. W. IV, pp. 432-437. Sybel (III, p. 239) incorrectly speaks of "one dispatch" but summarizes both.

But in the meantime, he thought it well to discuss possibilities, and suggested three alternatives: Augustenburg, Oldenburg, and Prussian annexation. The Augustenburg solution he considered the easiest to carry through under the circumstances.

Surprised and delighted, Rechberg agreed at once on Augustenburg. But he insisted that both courts should take a further step and declare formally before the conference their adhesion to the Prince. The other two alternatives he thought impossible of accomplishment. After the interview had closed, Werther hastened to telegraph this news to his chief.

The Austrian reply came as an unpleasant surprise to Bismarck.⁸¹ He had misjudged the situation, believing Austria's dislike for Augustenburg to be stronger than her dislike for Prussian annexation.⁸² For the first time since the *entente* had come into being, Austria threatened to take the initiative out of Prussia's hands. In order not to be left behind, Bismarck accepted Rechberg's proposal, and instructed Bernstorff to associate himself with the Austrian envoys in the new move.⁸³ But in a confidential telegram, he told his ambassador to drop Augustenburg, if the Prince's candidacy met with more opposition than the proposal to divide Schleswig.⁸⁴ Scenting the hostile purpose in Rechberg's proposal, Bismarck had prepared his counter-mines: he looked with marked favor upon the claims of the Grand Duke of Oldenburg, the open support

⁸¹ His reactions are described by Talleyrand (*Origines* III, pp. 105-107. See also Jansen-Samwer p. 351 note 1; Lenz p. 242; Steefel p. 233).

⁸² Bismarck seems to have laid entirely too much weight on certain alleged words of Biegeleben's, while the latter was in Berlin a month before, to the effect that Austria would sooner recognize the claim of a Prussian prince to the throne of the Duchies than that of Augustenburg (Sybel III, p. 223; *G. W.* IV, p. 397. Cf. *Origines* III, p. 107).

⁸³ King William, too, felt that Augustenburg's name should be proposed by Prussia, "in order not to fall behind Austria and the others." (William to Bismarck, May 24, 1864; Horst Kohl: *Anhang zu den Gedanken und Erinnerungen* I, pp. 110-111). Karolyi wired that the new policy had called forth "the greatest satisfaction" from the King (Karolyi to Rechberg, May 27, tg. No. 95).

⁸⁴ Sybel III, p. 247; *G. W.* IV, p. 444, No. 385.

of which by Russia Bismarck probably now, if not before, encouraged.⁸⁵

Meanwhile Rechberg's instructions sanctioning the adoption of Augustenburg had reached London.⁸⁶ In conformity with them Biegeleben and Apponyi sought out Bernstorff and Beust, and Lord Russell, the president of the Conference, to plan the strategy for the ensuing meeting.⁸⁷ Bernstorff himself composed the formal declaration in favor of Augustenburg, which was given to Apponyi to read at the beginning of the session, in the name of the German powers and the Confederation. Lord Russell was to follow with the English compromise proposal to divide Schleswig by nationalities, after which Bernstorff on behalf of the Germans would accept the division principle on condition of the exchange of Lauenburg for northern Schleswig, a means of masking the nationality issue.⁸⁸

The Austrian envoys were optimistic. Bernstorff showed them a telegram from Bismarck in terms practically identical with Rechberg's instructions and equally positive in rejecting a plebiscite.⁸⁹ That two succeeding telegrams from Berlin

⁸⁵ He wired to Bernstorff: Die preussischen Interessen werden bei der Oldenburgischen Kandidatur so gut gewahrt werden können, als bei der Augustenburgischen; Russland meint "besser" (*Ibid.*). Two months earlier, Bismarck had remarked to Karolyi: "Falls es durchaus zur Lostrennung Schlcswig-Holsteins von Dänemark kommen werde, könne man hier [in Berlin] nur die unter der Voraussetzung eines Verzichtes der älteren russischen (Gottorp'schen Linie) legal mögliche Candidatur des Grossherzogs von Oldenburg bevorzugen." (Underlined in original: Karolyi to Rechberg, March 26, 1864, No. 37A). See also Steefel p. 234 note 85, and p. 241 note 118.

⁸⁶ Rechberg to Apponyi and Biegeleben, May 24, 1864, Nos. 1 and 2 (HHS; partially printed by Friedrich Graf Revertera: "Rechberg und Bismarck 1863 bis 1864," in *Deutsche Revue* XXVIII, 1903, Heft 4, pp. 265-266; completely by Steefel, pp. 342-347).

⁸⁷ The following from Biegeleben's report to Rechberg, May 31, 1864, No. 54A.

⁸⁸ The idea of the Lauenburg exchange was a happy invention of Bismarck's, which Rechberg eagerly pounced upon. Christian IX's title to Lauenburg was far better than to the other Duchies (Rechberg to Biegeleben and Apponyi, May 24, 1864, No. 2).

⁸⁹ "... questioning inhabitants entirely superfluous through installation of Augustenburg. . . ." (G. W. IV, pp. 442-443, No. 383).

prescribed quite another attitude was of course kept secret from the Austrians.⁹⁰ Confident that the English statesmen had prepared their protégés, the Danes, to discuss the new proposition, and expecting full support from Bernstorff and Beust, and probably from the French, the Austrian delegates entered the Conference without misgiving.

Already the news of the adoption of Augustenburg had been trumpeted throughout Germany by the official and semi-official Austrian journals under Schmerling's influence and pay, and great was the joy among the people. Many a good citizen read with pleasure that "it would be Austria's task to preserve the full sovereignty of the new Duke," and other more direct attacks on the idea of annexation to Prussia.⁹¹ The smaller states were in raptures; in Prussia and elsewhere, "liberal" hearts beat faster. King William told Augustenburg's mother that her son would certainly come into his heritage.⁹²

On May 28, the London Conference convened for its sixth full session.⁹³ When the diplomats had all assembled, Count Apponyi arose and read the following declaration: ". . . the plenipotentiaries of the German powers, in concert with the plenipotentiary of the Germanic Confederation, have received orders to demand the complete separation of Schleswig and Holstein from Denmark, and their union in a single state under the sovereignty of the Hereditary Prince of Schleswig-Holstein-Sonderburg-Augustenburg, who can not only bring forward, in the opinion of Germany, the greatest right to the succession in

⁹⁰ "The passage in my telegram of yesterday concerning unnecessary questioning of inhabitants was taken over by mistake from the Austrian draft and is *not* to be advocated by us because of France. . . ." (*G. W.* IV, p. 443 note 1). "If matters take such a turn tomorrow that our program encounters more opposition in the person of the candidate Augustenburg than in the principle, then you are not to let the personal question endanger the success of the essential principle. . . ." (*G. W.* IV, p. 444, No. 385).

⁹¹ Sybel III, p. 246. Schmerling foreshadowed Austria's return to her "great work of federal reform."

⁹² Jansen-Samwer p. 335.

⁹³ The following from the protocol of the session of May 28, in *Staatsarchiv* VII, pp. 23-32. Beust omitted from his memoirs his report on this session.

the said Duchies, so that his recognition by the Diet is assured, but who also possesses the undoubted suffrage of the immense majority of the population of these countries." Lord Russell then followed with the proposal to divide Schleswig. But before Bernstorff could offer the second, more conciliatory German proposal for the exchange of Lauenburg, unforeseen difficulties began to arise. In a tone of pained surprise and ill-concealed irritation, Baron Brunnow, delegate of Russia, rejected the Augustenburg proposal and reserved the rights of the Grand Duke of Oldenburg to the Duchies.⁹⁴ France wanted a plebiscite after all. Sweden also. The Danes declared that the present German plan was even worse than the Personal Union. But the "most unkindest cut of all" came from Bernstorff, who—quite according to instructions—"made not the slightest effort to support the original demand of the German powers for the separation of the *whole* of Schleswig" from Denmark.⁹⁵ In spite of Beust's admonition to the Danes to take the Augustenburg proposal "very seriously," and a weak defense by Biegeleben, the Conference would not, after Russia's emphatic challenge and the Danish intransigence, accept Augustenburg. Only the English compromise remained on the docket for the next session.

If the Austrians hoped to smuggle Augustenburg or Personal Union into some later meeting after a boundary line in Schleswig had been agreed upon, they were doomed to disappointment.⁹⁶ An agreement was not reached, though the conferees haggled for a month longer. For Austria, it was a

⁹⁴ The Tsar Alexander was at this time contemplating a cession of his own claims to the Grand Duke, who would thus possess all the Gottorp claims. It is uncertain whether and when this was done in a binding fashion.

⁹⁵ So Biegeleben complained to Rechberg, May 31, 1864, No. 54B.

⁹⁶ Possibly this was in Rechberg's mind, as Bismarck suspected (*G. W.* IV, p. 443). Rechberg coquetted also with the utterly impractical plan of incorporating the entire Danish monarchy into the German Confederation, an idea favored by Russia and Christian IX, but Austria did not want to sponsor it herself (*Origines* III, pp. 225, 233).

most uncomfortable month.⁹⁷ The question of nationality dominated the discussions, and in spite of warm protests from Vienna, Bismarck even proposed a plebiscite to determine the wishes of the Schleswigers.⁹⁸ Finally, when England suggested arbitration of the boundary to end the impasse, Rechberg desired to accept the olive branch and sent affirmative instructions to Biegeleben,⁹⁹ but at the last minute Bismarck persuaded him to cancel them and join in the Prussian rejection.¹⁰⁰ In truth, both Danes and Prussians were itching to renew the fight, and war-weary Austria was dragged again into war.

The issue of the London Conference was a dismal failure for Austria. Bismarck had buried the London treaty and side-tracked Personal Union, arbitration, and Augustenburg. He had calculated correctly on the stubbornness of the Danes, the disinclination of England and France to go to war, and the incompetence of Austria to strike out on an independent course. Rechberg neither could nor would intrigue with other powers against his ally, while Apponyi and Biegeleben had failed to take adroit advantage of English and Russian sentiment for the Personal Union.¹⁰¹ This solution, upon which

⁹⁷ Biegeleben later wrote to a friend: "To me personally the whole boundary question was disagreeable, and I felt myself beaten, more than any other man in London. . . ." (Wollheim da Fonseca: *Neue Indiscretionen* I, pp. 220-221).

⁹⁸ Rechberg expressed his "astonishment" that a monarchy, founded on historical rights, should adopt "even temporarily . . . so disastrous a modern principle" as the plebiscite, adding that no state may renounce its basic principles and survive. How would Prussia like a plebiscite in Posen, he asked. Austria would protest openly in the Conference against such a proposal (Rechberg to Karolyi, June 4, 1864, No. 1).

⁹⁹ Biegeleben was to accept arbitration, preferably by King Leopold, but if necessary by Napoleon III. "Wegen Mangel an Zeit können wir uns nicht mit Berlin verständigen, aber wir wünschen dass Sie in dieser Frage mit Ihren preus. Collegen gemeinsam Vorgehen. . . . Daher unsere vorläufige Zustimmung." Rechberg to Chotek (repeating tg. to Biegeleben), June 17, 1864.

¹⁰⁰ Jansen-Samwer p. 363; Sybel III, pp. 261-262.

¹⁰¹ Austria's obvious course was to gain England and Russia, and through them to approach the Danes with a more favorable settlement than Prussia could admit. But Franz Joseph had personally instructed Biegeleben to work

both Rechberg and Biegeleben had set their hearts,¹⁰² was perhaps in any case doomed to destruction on the rock of Danish and German popular opposition. But certainly it was presented to the Conference in the very best way to be rejected.¹⁰³ Such naïve and ineffectual strategy could not compete with Bismarck's resourceful diplomacy. Austria's two plans for a peace to checkmate Prussia had both fallen at the first shock.

The failure was more depressing to Biegeleben than to Rechberg, in the same measure that Biegeleben's mistrust of Prussia was greater than Rechberg's. From the sands of Trouville, where the *Hofrat* sought balm for his disappointment, he wrote to a friend:

"A diplomat doesn't willingly admit that he has failed all along the line; but in *this* affair, in view of the consequences which I fear, there is some consolation in privately admitting the complete collapse of all my ideas."¹⁰⁴

The foreign minister on the other hand could take solace in quite a different result. By his faithfulness to Prussia, he and the Emperor had retained the personal confidence of William

with Prussia in all questions (*G. W. IV*, p. 387, editor's note to No. 336). Thus the position of the envoys was a difficult one. Rechberg later blamed them for failing to win Palmerston's support (Engel-Janosi: *Graf Rechberg* p. 149).

¹⁰² Rechberg to his brother, January 9, 1867 (Engel-Janosi p. 147). Biegeleben to Wollheim, July 12, 1864: "... More than any other man in London I felt beaten, for I was the only decided champion of legality in the Succession question, and I am convinced that the conscientious safeguarding of the legal question must have led to the establishment of Personal Union. . . ." (Wollheim da Fonseca I, pp. 220-221). This is borne out by an examination of Biegeleben's utterances before the Conference, as reported in the official protocols of the sessions of May 17, May 28, and June 6 (*Staatsarchiv VII*, pp. 18, 20, 31, 55, etc.).

¹⁰³ How could the Elder-Danish firebrands be expected to accept the first, and presumably the most extreme, peace-proposal of their foes, especially since it was not supported by the neutral powers? After its rejection, it was blindness to expect them to accept a still more distasteful proposal, the recognition of the rebel Augustenburg.

¹⁰⁴ Biegeleben to Wollheim, July 12, 1864 (Wollheim da Fonseca I, pp. 220-221).

and Bismarck. Let Clarendon sneer at Austria's "abdication," and let Palmerston threaten dire consequences in Venetia and Hungary.¹⁰⁵ England's friendship was not worth the loss of Prussia's alliance.

If the Austrian policy was viewed with contempt outside of Germany, within Germany there was some praise for her championship of Augustenburg. The *Ballplatz* decided to put on a bold face, and in a circular note of July 8, Rechberg informed all the German courts that Austria considered the Augustenburg declaration to be "the most valuable result of the Conference."¹⁰⁶ Had she not persuaded Prussia to declare before the forum of Europe, that Augustenburg was the most legal and the most popular candidate?¹⁰⁷ For the present at least, Rechberg intended to cling to the Prince, and when Bismarck, scarcely ten days after the London declaration, had switched again to the Oldenburg candidacy, the Austrian minister refused to "turn another somersault."¹⁰⁸

It was therefore evident that the two allies had drawn different conclusions from their action in London. Bismarck considered it merely a temporary proposal from which Prussia and Austria were released without moral obligation, as soon as it was rejected by their opponents,¹⁰⁹ and he refused to let it hamper his future plans. He had hitched Augustenburg to the plow to bring it forward, and when it had gotten under

¹⁰⁵ Apponyi wrote: "Lord Clarendon profite de son intimité avec moi . . . pour mettre mon amour propre en jeu, en m'exprimant sans cesse le regret 'de voir une Puissance comme l'Autriche abdiquer son rôle de Grande Puissance et son indépendance pour devenir le fouet et l'instrument des plans ambitieux de sa rivale.' Selon lui, nous avons beaucoup à perdre et rien à gagner à une pareille politique, remplie de dangereuses conséquences pour nous. On attribue même à ce sujet un propos à Lord Palmerston, qui auroit dit: 'En bravant l'Angleterre, l'Autriche perdra probablement la Vénétie—tant mieux—elle perdra peut-être aussi la Hongrie—tant pis!'" (Apponyi to Rechberg, June 27, 1864, No. 65C).

¹⁰⁶ Jansen-Samwer p. 318.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.* p. 314.

¹⁰⁸ Rechberg's remark (Vogt p. 36). Cf. Sybel III, p. 253.

¹⁰⁹ Bismarck to Werther, June 8, 1864 (*G. W.* IV, p. 455, and Sybel III, p. 253).

way he had unhitched him again.¹¹⁰ By false insinuations, Bismarck began to weaken the Prince's hold on the King's sympathy.¹¹¹ The simultaneous announcement by the Grand Duke of Oldenburg that his own hat was now in the ring decided William to consider himself absolved from the consequences of the declaration of May 28, and to favor Augustenburg no longer.¹¹²

Needless to say, the Austrian statesmen did not cling to the Prince's candidacy out of genuine sympathy for him or his cause. To Franz Joseph, to Rechberg, to Biegeleben, as much as to Bismarck, the Prince was merely a pawn on the chess-board of German rivalry.¹¹³ But whereas Bismarck, with his eye on Russia and France, could "unhitch the ox" without compunction, the Austrians, with their eyes on the German states, neither dared nor desired as yet to do so. The Emperor and Count Rechberg, it is true, had accepted the new course far from enthusiastically;¹¹⁴ but Schmerling, and later Biegeleben, seized upon and maintained the Augustenburg policy with all the fervor of fanatics.¹¹⁵ To the Habsburg and his

¹¹⁰ Bismarck's words to Beust (Vogt p. 212).

¹¹¹ This was the purpose of Bismarck's interview with Augustenburg on June 1, of which Bismarck wrote a highly tendentious abstract in *usum regis*, distorting the Duke's utterances to make him appear an ungrateful nuisance. This summary (in *G. W.* IV, pp. 448-450) was used by Sybel III, p. 251 exclusively. The Prince's own "more trustworthy" (Lenz p. 246) report is in Jansen-Samwer pp. 731-736. Of the numerous interpretations of this episode, those of Lenz pp. 245-253, and Stern IX, pp. 379-380, seem more convincing than that of Wahl: "Die Unterredung Bismarcks mit dem Herzog Friedrich von Augustenburg," in *Historische Zeitschrift* XCV, 1905, pp. 58-70.

¹¹² This is clear from William's marginals on a memorandum from Duke Friedrich, c September 14, 1864 (Jansen-Samwer p. 744).

¹¹³ Even Schmerling's fellow-feeling for a leading liberal was secondary to his desire to enroll the Prince's following for another Great-German crusade under Austria's banners.

¹¹⁴ On June 1, Rechberg instructed Karolyi to "head off" the Prince's projected visit to Vienna (tg. June 1, 1864). Cf. Gebauer: *Herzog Friedrich VIII von Schleswig-Holstein* p. 113. The prince was never received by Franz Joseph nor his ministers.

¹¹⁵ At least in public. Later on, in the winter of 1864-65, Schmerling's ardor cooled when he found that the Austrian public cared less whether

minister of foreign affairs, the Augustenburg candidacy was the best solution of the vexed question of the Duchies,—provided Prussia would accept it. To the Schmerling party and the counsellors of the foreign office, it was a solution to be forced upon Prussia at all costs. These opposing views for almost two years waged a contest for mastery in *Ballplatz* and *Hofburg*.

Augustenburg or Oldenburg ascended the new throne, than whether Austria went empty-handed (Protocol of minister council, January 11, 1865; Appendix A, No. 4, below); and when Biegelchen learned of the Prince's concessions to Bismarck, he privately admitted that he had lost interest in the Prince, though Austria would still support him publicly (Vogt p. 64).

CHAPTER III

THE ALLIANCE UNDER STRAIN

WHAT the diplomats had failed to accomplish in two months of conferences, the generals now secured in less than one month of fighting. The war began on June 28 with the capture of the strategic island of Alsén by the Germans. A fortnight later, the Danes sued at last for peace. On July 20, hostilities ceased.¹

None but the initiated knew that Austria herself had called a halt, and that but for the Danish collapse, Prussia would have had to continue the campaign alone.² Franz Joseph had twice in fact refused to send Austrian troops for the next military objective, the seizure of Fünen, an island which barred the way to the Danish capital. The first refusal, in May,³ had so aroused Bismarck's ire that he had hinted at an abandonment of the alliance, if Austria would not follow to Fünen.⁴ In June he had renewed the demand at Karlsbad, where Rechberg spent several days with him in discussions concerning the impending rupture of the London Conference and the further prosecution of the war.⁵ At that time, England's menac-

¹ Sybel III, pp. 261-271.

² Austria did not intend to withdraw from Denmark, but simply from further offensive operations.

³ Rechberg to Chotek, May 12, 1864. The chargé had reported (May 9, No. 45A) that all Prussians in high office "were burning to occupy Fünen."

⁴ Bismarck cried out, "Also, wir sollen nicht nach Fünen gehen, dann können wir überhaupt nicht mehr Krieg führen. . . ." and later "in Falle eines ernstlichen Widerstandes der kais. Regierung gegen energische Fortführung des Kriegs" he threatened "*die Trennung von der Allianz mit Oesterreich.*" But Bismarck added, "Er hoffe noch immer es werde nicht so weit kommen." (Postscript to Chotek's No. 50, May 15, 1864).

⁵ June 19 to 25 (Horst Kohl: *Bismarck-Regesten* I, p. 234). Both sovereigns arrived during the same week. On June 25, Franz Joseph and Rechberg left for Vienna, but Bismarck and William remained a month longer, while the latter completed his "cure." On July 21, Bismarck left for Vienna for further conferences with Rechberg.

ing attitude was worrying the Austrian minister, for the Austrian fleet in the North Sea lay at the mercy of the English navy; and Palmerston might easily stir up Italy to attack the province of Venetia. Moreover, a breach with England would render Austria's financial situation desperate.⁶ It was said that Rothschild had refused a loan unless Austria made peace. Meanwhile there was scarcely enough money in the treasury to pay the soldiers for another month.⁷ Instead of girding herself for a politically dangerous campaign on Fünen, Austria was reckoning up the costs of the campaign of twelve years before.⁸

King William desired "to keep to a line upon which Austria could and would follow without scruples," but his minister again threatened to proceed alone without her. The utmost that he could obtain, however, was his ally's consent to military demonstrations against the island.⁹ Yet it was a victory to have gotten Austria back into the war at all. On June 24, the points of agreement had been set down on paper in the third Austro-Prussian convention since the beginning of the year.¹⁰ Here for the first time the object of the war was openly declared to be the *complete* separation of the Duchies from Denmark.

Now that the Danes at last had sued for peace, this object was within Bismarck's grasp. Leaving his sovereign to take a second *Kur* at Gastein, he rejoined Rechberg in Vienna on

⁶ *G. W.* IV, pp. 471-472, and Sybel III, pp. 261-262. (Bismarck's own account of the Karlsbad conversations is our chief source, *G. W.* IV, pp. 471-476). Somewhat the same argument was used by Franz Joseph to Werther in July (*G. W.* IV, p. 497, editor's note to No. 436).

⁷ *G. W.* IV, p. 525.

⁸ Rechberg to Karolyi, May 21, 1864, No. 1. Austria sent 20,000 troops in 1851 to suppress the revolt of the Holsteiners against the Danish government. She withdrew them when Denmark made the agreements of 1851-52 granting special rights to Schleswig-Holstein.

⁹ *G. W.* IV, p. 474. From this it would appear that the King was unwilling to proceed as yet without Austria, and Bismarck's threat was a bluff.

¹⁰ Text in *G. W.* IV, p. 475. The earlier agreements were, of course, the alliance protocol of January 16, and the agreement of March 5.

July 22 to prepare for negotiations with the defeated enemy.¹¹

For nine days, Bismarck remained in the Austrian capital, gazed upon by the Viennese "like the newest hippopotamus at the zoo."¹² In many a heart-to-heart talk, the two friends discussed in detail not only the peace terms to be imposed, but every problem in the relations between the two countries, the provisional government for the Duchies, the Rendsburg incident, the rivalry between Austria and the Prussian-directed *Zollverein*.¹³

Bismarck's first object was to provide for further warfare, in case the Danes refused to yield the Duchies *in toto*. To his renewed plea for the Fünen expedition, Franz Joseph and his minister still turned deaf ears. "The simplest and most practical policy," Rechberg had advised the Emperor, "would be for the two powers . . . to maintain their present military position, to hold and use Jutland as a pawn, to unite the three Duchies into one, to install as soon as possible the sovereign whom the Diet has recognized as legitimate, and, remaining entirely on the defensive, to leave it to Denmark to attack,—an improbable contingency."¹⁴ Bismarck was consequently informed that Austria would go no farther; and Rechberg had the temerity to add that Prussia might proceed to Fünen alone, thinking that such an action would arouse the enmity of all Germany and Europe.¹⁵ Bismarck doubted that Austria really meant to quit.¹⁶ But the King took Rechberg at his word, and sent orders to Prince Friedrich Karl to continue with the land-

¹¹ *Bismarck-Regesten* I, p. 236.

¹² Horst Kohl: *Bismarck-Briefe*, p. 70.

¹³ Reported by Bismarck to his sovereign, *G. W.* IV, pp. 505-507, 513-520, 524-525.

¹⁴ Rechberg's *Vortrag*, Vienna July 22, 1864 (HHS: *Kabinettskanzlei*).

¹⁵ *G. W.* IV, p. 505; Rechberg's *Vortrag*, July 22. Rechberg's *arrière-pensées* appear in a further passage in his *Vortrag*: "Bei einem solchen Auftreten hätten wir ganz Deutschland und Europa auf unsere Seite und würden entweder Preussen nötigen seine hochfahrenden kriegerischen Pläne aufzugeben, oder sie allein auf die Gefahr hin zu verfolgen, sowohl von seinen bisherigen Verbündeten, als vom Bunde isolirt, in eine Richtung sich zu verirren, wo es die europäischen Mächte zu Gegnern haben würde."

¹⁶ *G. W.* IV, n. 205.

ing on Fünen even without Austria's cooperation, in case hostilities should begin again.¹⁷ The occasion did not arise, however.

In the *pourparlers* with the Danes, which began in Vienna on July 25, Rechberg wisely left the initiative to his colleague.¹⁸ Some time before, the Prussian minister had outlined two essential conditions of peace: the outright cession of the three Duchies to Austria and Prussia conjointly, and the placing of the war costs, not upon Denmark, but upon the Duchies themselves, which would also bear their share of the Danish national debt.¹⁹ This was a canny idea of Bismarck's to outplay Austria, for Prussia could later offer to relieve the Duchies of this heavy financial burden if they would consent to be annexed by Prussia. Poor Austria could not compete with such an inducement. Bismarck now hinted confidentially to Rechberg that, as partial reimbursement for their war expenses, each state should take a bit of the Duchies' territory: Prussia, Lauenburg; Austria, the "West-Jutland islands" in the North Sea off the coast of Schleswig.²⁰ This was a very small bait, but Bismarck's object was none the less clear, and two-fold: to establish a precedent for Prussian annexations in the Duchies, and to make Austria an accomplice in dividing up the spoils. Should Austria annex these islands, she would thereby abandon her contention that the two powers were

¹⁷ W. Foerster: *Prinz Friedrich Karl von Preussen* (Stuttgart 1910) I, p. 358.

¹⁸ G. W. IV, p. 513 ff.

¹⁹ Bismarck to Werther, July 11, 1864 (G. W. IV, pp. 495-496).

²⁰ The proper name for these islands was "North Friesian Islands." (*Stieckler's Handatlas*, Gotha 1865). Hardly more than four of them were of any consequence at all, and of these four, only one—Fanö—belonged to Jutland, the rest forming part of Schleswig. In early July the Austrian fleet had played a decisive part in capturing them. As all the islands together comprised less territory than Lauenburg, it seems clear that Bismarck offered Austria the entire chain, and not simply the few which were "west of Jutland" itself. Sybel (III, 274) incorrectly asserts that Bismarck offered the "Danish Islands in the West Indies," obviously having misread Abeken's almost illegible draft, "west-indischen" instead of the correct "west-jütischen Inseln." (G. W. IV, p. 505). Sybel thus missed the whole point of Bismarck's suggestion, viz., to make Austria an accomplice in annexing part of the Duchies.

simply trustees for the future sovereign. In point of fact Rechberg had already made inquiries as to the value of the islands, but had found them to be "unprofitable, expensive, and untenable in war."²¹ For this reason, and not because of legal scruples, Rechberg rejected the overture at once. The request for Lauenburg he referred to his sovereign, who did not give his assent to the project.²² Without further argument, Bismarck and Rechberg agreed to demand from the Danes the cession of all three Duchies to the two allied sovereigns, who would administer them jointly until they could unite upon their ultimate fate. The Danes bowed to the inevitable, and signed the peace preliminaries on August 1.²³ Final negotiations were to begin within a month.

THE REACTION AGAINST RECHBERG

Every Austrian, from the Emperor to the humblest *Wiener Dienstmann*, breathed a sigh of relief. Those who looked upon the Prussian alliance, not as a *mariage du coeur*, but as a temporary and most immoral *liaison*, no longer felt the need for Prussia's help in warding off foreign interference. Austria's natural allies, they thought, were the German *Mittelstaaten*, whose very existence was menaced by the ambitions of the same northern power that challenged Austrian supremacy in Germany. These good folk had looked on with dismay when Rechberg during July had cooperated in Bismarck's hostile moves at Frankfurt: the suppression of Beust's reports on

²¹ *G. W.* IV, p. 505. Rechberg's object was probably to establish a naval base there and gain a point of vantage in North Germany from which to extend Austrian protection and influence to Hanover and the new state of Schleswig-Holstein. (Cf. Engel-Janosi: *Graf Rechberg* p. 145; and Hassell: *Geschichte des Königreichs Hannover* II-2, p. 257).

²² Rechberg declared that he personally had no objection to Prussian annexation of Lauenburg (*G. W.* IV, p. 505). Probably Biegeleben and Schmerling persuaded the Emperor against it. They could not, however, use legal arguments against it, for the status of this tiny Duchy was different from that of the others. Not only was its possession by Christian IX legal and virtually uncontested, but also its inhabitants desired to be annexed to the neighboring Prussian state.

²³ Text in *Staatsarchiv* VII, pp. 145-148.

the London Conference, which urged the immediate recognition of Augustenburg by the Diet; and the demand that the Prince submit his claims for examination like any other candidate.²⁴ What insults to the "most legal and most popular"!

"The newspapers of all colors," wrote one of Bismarck's confidants, after a visit in Vienna, "do not conceal the bitter feeling that Austria has become Prussia's vassal, and Rechberg is everywhere scoffed at, while Bismarck is envied and praised."²⁵ "It is simply impossible to make the *Herr Graf* popular," admitted an official of the Austrian press bureau.²⁶

Rechberg was even dubbed "*le nègre de Monsieur de Bismarck*."²⁷

This widespread public disgust at Rechberg and his Prussian policy was grist for Schmerling's mill. The ambitious *Staatsminister* had long felt the humiliation of Austria's position in the eyes of Germany and of Europe, and he foresaw merciless attacks in the *Reichsrat* (called for November), which could be parried only by showing some positive gain from the alliance, or by promising a change of policy. He had therefore determined to reassert an influence over the conduct of foreign affairs. The time, he thought, would soon be propitious for a return to the Great-Germany program, at which he had hinted in the *Reichsrat* in March, and in the

²⁴ Sybel III, pp. 271-272. Beust's reports (presented to the Diet on June 27 and 29) summed up his activities in London, and concluded with the advice to recognize Augustenburg at once, and to declare war on Denmark, so that the Diet might take part in the peace negotiations. The first recommendation angered Bismarck, the second enraged Rechberg, as did also Beust's hint at the need of calling a German parliament. Beust was "like a barking dog, running between the hoofs of the allied steeds." (Friedjung: *Kampf I*, p. 294).

²⁵ Keudell to Max Duncker, Gastein, August 3, 1864 (Duncker: *Politischer Briefwechsel* pp. 382-383).

²⁶ Vogt p. 37 note 5. Rechberg had never possessed the favor of the liberal masses and *bourgeoisie*, since his opposition to the Parliament in 1860. (Engel-Janosi p. 123).

²⁷ Vitzthum von Eckstädt: *London, Gastein und Sadowa*, p. 24. This epithet was perhaps coined by Clarendon, who said to Beust in London, "... Bismarck est un aventurier sans foi et loi et Rechberg est son nègre." (Dalwigk: *Tagebücher* p. 140. Cf. Beust: *Aus drei Vierteljahrhunderten I*, p. 377).

press in May. That barrage of anti-Prussian articles in May had opened his press-campaign. The *mot d'ordre* to his journalist cohorts was now "*rapprochement* with the German *Mittelstaaten*, and Austria's return to the policy of supporting the Diet."²⁸

Having decided the new course, Schmerling set about to accomplish two things: first, to regain the confidence of the German small states; second, to force Rechberg to conform or resign.

As a preliminary to the first, the *Staatsminister* wished to test the terrain in South Germany. For this mission, he sent Julius Fröbel, the able editor of his personal organ, the *Beobachter*, privately to Munich, Stuttgart, Karlsruhe, and Darmstadt. Armed with a letter from Schmerling, Fröbel sought out the leading ministers, present and prospective, of the four states, and encouraged the idea of unity and solidarity among them, with a leaning toward Austria.²⁹ Beust, too, was working hard to galvanize these states into common action.

Meanwhile, Schmerling was capitalizing Rechberg's unpopularity in an attempt to weaken that minister's position in the cabinet. This was no easy task, for Rechberg's policy was Franz Joseph's.³⁰ But the Kaiser, in spite of his dislike for constitutional democracy, was sensitive to a widespread popular outburst like the present one.³¹ Beside his control of the press, Schmerling held other trump cards. He could count on the support of Hofrat von Biegeleben, who had returned from

²⁸ Fröbel: *Ein Lebenslauf* II, p. 311. Schmerling, not Rechberg, controlled the "secret fund." (Friedjung: *Kampf* II, p. 585).

²⁹ Schmerling's letter, dated July 30, 1864, asked Fröbel to report his impressions. He was given no more specific instructions than to work for the "realization of the *Trias*-idea." (Fröbel II, pp. 311-312). He left on August 4 and returned on September 19. The only fertile ground upon which the seed fell was Hesse-Darmstadt (*Ibid.* II, p. 327; W. Schüssler: *Die Tagebücher des Freiherrn Reinhard von Dalwigk zu Lichtenfels* p. 143, reporting the conversation on September 10). But Dalwigk and the Grand Duke were suspicious of Rechberg (Schüssler pp. 144, 150).

³⁰ Engel-Janosi p. 125; *Briefe Kaiser Franz Josephs I. an seine Mutter* pp. 333-334, 339.

³¹ Bismarck noted this quality in the Emperor (*G. W.* IV, p. 570).

his vacation burning with disappointment and mistrust of Prussia. Moreover, the majority of the cabinet were henchmen of the *Staatsminister*.³² With these forces arrayed behind him, Schmerling took as an issue, Austria's losing fight with Prussia for the commercial leadership of the German states, a struggle which had been paralleling the political contest since 1859. He summoned Rechberg to secure from Prussia the renewal of Austria's option to join the *Zollverein*, or to resign his portfolio.³³ Instead of a frontal attack on the Prussian alliance, which would have alienated the Emperor, Schmerling showed his adroitness in making a flank attack with the demand that Rechberg produce one immediate positive concession from his beloved ally.³⁴

* * * * *

Meanwhile Prussia herself was putting Rechberg's loyalty to a severe test and giving the Emperor some uneasiness. Now that the war had been won without the help of the Diet, Bismarck determined to pay back the little states with interest, and Beust in particular, for all the annoyance they had caused the powers since the beginning of the Augustenburg agitation.³⁵ Probably also, Bismarck desired to test his ally's fidelity under the altered circumstances of peace.

The opportunity came in the so-called Rendsburg incident,

³² Only Count Esterhazy and FML Franck (war minister) leaned toward the conservative views of Rechberg.

³³ By article 25 of the treaty of February 13, 1853 between the *Zollverein* and Austria, the latter state was granted the right to unite with the *Zollverein*, if she requested negotiations to that effect before 1861. Austria did not request such tariff union till 1862, and it was then refused by Prussia. Nevertheless Austria was now demanding that the same option to join be carried over into the new treaty without time limit. (The old treaty was to lapse in 1865).

³⁴ Our information for this political crisis in July comes largely from Bismarck, who got it first hand in Vienna from Rechberg and Werther (*G. W. IV*, p. 513 no. 47, p. 570; H. von Poschinger: *Aktenstücke zur Wirtschaftspolitik des Fürsten Bismarck I*, pp. 31-32). These facts and sources are not cited in the study by F. Engel-Janosi: "Die Krise des Jahres 1864 in Oesterreich," in *Historische Studien A. F. Pribram zum 70. Geburtstag dargebracht* pp. 141-195 (cited henceforth, Engel-Janosi: *Krise*).

³⁵ *G. W. IV*, p. 511.

which occurred just before Bismarck left Karlsbad for Vienna.³⁶ As a result of street brawls between Prussian soldiers and the Hanoverian troops³⁷ occupying the Holstein fortress of Rendsburg, King William, prompted by Bismarck,³⁸ ordered Prince Friedrich Karl to take possession of Rendsburg with a considerable force.³⁹ At the same time, Bismarck instructed his press-agents to "play-up" the "excesses" of the Hanoverian soldiers.⁴⁰ On July 21, the latter, commanded by the Saxon general, von Hake, left Rendsburg under protest before the triumphant entry of six thousand Prussians. A cry of bitter rage at this arbitrary act of force went up from Germany and Austria,⁴¹ and found its repercussion in a protest of the Diet at Frankfurt, in many German parliaments, and in the press of Vienna as well.⁴² Bismarck sought to unload the odium upon Beust, "the Garibaldi of Germany," as he called him.⁴³ He cautioned Rechberg that it was dangerous to deal

³⁶ The most detailed account of the Rendsburg incident is in W. von Hassell: *Geschichte des Königreichs Hannover* II, part 2, pp. 155-175, 179, 184-185, 189, from Hanoverian sources. The Prussian case is strongly stated in Bismarck's instructions to Ysenburg (*G. W.* IV, pp. 507-508) and to Werther (*Ibid.* pp. 508-510), and in Sybel III, pp. 272-273 and 283. Saxon sources have been used by Paul Hassell: *Aus dem Leben des Königs Albert von Sachsen* II, pp. 190-195, 198-199. Additional details in Vogt pp. 38-40; Jansen-Samwer pp. 370, 414; G. Zernin: *Des Leben des kg. preussischen Generals der Infanterie August von Goben I* (Berlin 1895) pp. 370-372; Dammers: *Erinnerungen und Erlebnisse* (Hanover 1890) p. 48 ff.; R. von Keudell: *Fürst und Fürstin Bismarck* p. 164.

³⁷ Sybel incorrectly speaks of Saxon troops only (III, p. 272).

³⁸ Keudell p. 164. For Bismarck's motives, see *G. W.* IV, pp. 506-507, and 504. Even Prince Friedrich Karl, the Prussian commander in the Duchies, suspected political motives behind William's orders (Hassell II, p. 193). Later, to Rechberg, Bismarck sought to throw the blame on the generals in the *entourage* of the King (Vogt p. 39). Undoubtedly, Roon, who was also with the King, gave strong support. (Roon: *Denkwürdigkeiten* II, p. 254 ff.).

³⁹ Sybel III, p. 272; *G. W.* IV, p. 504, editor's note.

⁴⁰ *G. W.* IV, p. 504. That Bismarck's orders were carried out is proved by excerpts from Prussian newspapers in Hassell: *Hannover* II-2, p. 165.

⁴¹ It was called a "Vergewaltigung" and "Gewaltstreich" by the Prussian general who carried out the *coup* (Zernin I, p. 372).

⁴² Hassell II-2, pp. 167-168; Hassell II, p. 194; Vogt p. 39; Keudell p. 165.

⁴³ Bismarck's words to the Hanoverian envoy, Stockhausen (Hassell II-2, p. 169).

too tenderly with the *Mittelstaaten*, and he vehemently urged a policy of coercion to put them in their proper places.⁴⁴

Meanwhile, Hanover had appealed to Austria, and the other German states were also directing their gaze upon that august power which held the presidency of the Diet. What would the Emperor do? Would he approve the method of intimidation used by his ally, who desired at heart the overthrow of the existing confederation? Or should he champion the petty states, which, however "revolutionary" their parliaments, still clung to the Austria-dominated Diet? When Prussia had begun to get out of hand in May, Austria had raised a warning finger with the Augustenburg declaration. It was time to warn again. This necessity for curbing Prussia and keeping harmony in the German household, in addition to the increasing attacks of the Schmerling group and the public, compelled Rechberg to take more account of Austria's smaller neighbors than at any time since he had left in disgust the Nürnberg conference of 1863, and turned his face toward Berlin.

The Count and the Emperor chose a middle course. They did not wish to weaken the understanding with Prussia as long as the Danish treaty was still in the air, and they would not undertake formal mediation between their ally and their weaker friends.⁴⁵ But they determined not to let the Rendsburg challenge pass in silence. In a conversation with Bismarck during these Vienna negotiations, the Emperor "spoke at length about the Rendsburg affair, and did not conceal the fact that he considered the act of occupation hasty and hostile. . . . He criticised especially the large number of troops used, which had given the affair a more violent character."⁴⁶ When Rechberg also lectured Bismarck on his federal obligations, the latter feigned surprise, and in the end Rechberg had to content

⁴⁴ Bismarck to Werther, to be communicated to Rechberg (*G. W. IV*, p. 511). This dispatch contains a classic statement of Prussia's case against the small states of Germany.

⁴⁵ Vogt p. 38.

⁴⁶ Interview of July 23, as reported by Bismarck to William (*G. W. IV*, pp. 506-507).

himself with a far from apologetic declaration by Prussia in the Diet.⁴⁷ In the simultaneous episode of the Hamburg telegraph treaties, in which the Austrian minister again appealed to his colleague on behalf of the smaller states, he obtained even less satisfaction from Bismarck.⁴⁸ ✓

These failures augured ill for the commercial concession, which Schmerling was driving Rechberg to demand. On July 28, the latter presented to Prussia a somewhat peremptory note, requesting the immediate reopening of negotiations in a place suitable to Prussia.⁴⁹ Austria's *sine qua non*, it said, was a "binding promise" from Prussia that she would grant, in the new treaty, the option to join the *Zollverein* "even beyond the next *Zollverein* period." It was also demanded, that the basis of an agreement be reached *before* the completion of the new *Zollverein* treaty with France. "Should the royal cabinet, contrary to expectation, refuse to begin negotiations at once, we would be forced to consider this a disregard of existing treaty obligations, to our greatest regret, and we cannot conceal from ourselves that such an act would be incompatible with the happily existing friendly alliance-relations between the two governments."⁵⁰ With this curt

⁴⁷ At first, Bismarck had promised full satisfaction to Hanover (Hassell II-2, p. 167) and laid the blame on the military counsellors of the King (Vogt p. 39). But he had soon withdrawn his offer in anger at the rising outcries of the smaller states (*Ibid.*) and offered explanations in the Diet (Stern IX, p. 386). The findings of a commission of three, set up early in August on Hanover's suggestion, were rejected by Prince Friedrich Karl (Hassell II-2, p. 174).

⁴⁸ July 22, the two federal commissioners for Holstein signed treaties with the Hansa cities of Bremen and Hamburg, regulating the telegraph system of Holstein for ten years. This obviously cut athwart Prussia's desire to control that system (*G. W.* IV, p. 553). Legally, the commissioners had no right to conclude treaties for a term longer than the period of the federal occupation. Rechberg urged Bismarck to support a resolution in the Diet to legalize the treaties. Bismarck refused (Sybel III, pp. 273-274; Vogt pp. 42-43).

⁴⁹ *Staatsarchiv* IX, pp. 262-264. Cf. Sybel III, p. 286.

⁵⁰ This dispatch of July 28 was drafted by Max von Gagern, intimate friend of Biegeleben.

note, and the peace preliminaries in his pocket, Bismarck returned to his king at Gastein.⁵¹

As a result of the Rendsburg and telegraph treaty incidents, Bismarck left in Vienna more doubts in the minds of the Austrian statesmen than he had allayed. On the other hand, Beust's provocative campaign and the vociferous demands of the *Mittelstaaten* were equally annoying to the Kaiser and Count Rechberg.⁵² They disliked conflicts in the German family of states, from whatever side they arose, and decided to continue in the role of compromisers.

This determination was broadcast, that all might read, in the official journal the day after Bismarck had departed.⁵³ In brief, the statement ran as follows: The war was not undertaken for conquest [a slap at Prussia!], nor to carry out fantastic claims of nationality [a hit at the *Mittelstaaten*!], but in order to make good actual legal titles. . . . The two powers should negotiate the [final] peace terms by themselves, because the Diet took no part in the war [another for the *Mittelstaaten*!]; but they considered themselves by no means released from the deference due the Diet [another for Prussia!]. The well-founded rights of the federal authorities should suffer no injury from the cession [of the Duchies] to Austria and Prussia. The result will be an amicable and brotherly feeling among Germany's governments.

Since Prussia was less brotherly than the group of *Mittelstaaten*, even Rechberg began to feel that Austria should now take a firmer tone toward her ally than when they were fighting side by side against the opinion of Europe. The Schleswig-Holstein problem had ceased to be a European question and

⁵¹ Kohl: *Bismarck-Regesten* I, p. 237.

⁵² Rechberg had called Beust's London reports "insulting to the great powers, monstrous, dangerous." (Sybel III, p. 273). For Rechberg's anger with the small states, see Vogt p. 40. Franz Joseph's attitude as between the *Mittelstaaten* and Prussia had been summed up in his letter to Albert of Saxony, February 16, 1864 (Otto Ernst: *Franz Joseph I. in seinen Briefen* pp. 159-160).

⁵³ Inspired article in the *Wiener Abendpost*, August 2, 1864 (Jansen-Samwer p. 381).

had become a purely German one. As such, Rechberg no longer saw any danger in admitting the little states to a share in its settlement.⁵⁴ How much participation they would be accorded depended on their own docility as well as on Prussia's good-will. In their desire to place Augustenburg on the throne and to prevent an annexation to Prussia, their interests ran parallel with Austria's own.

In order to enlist the effective aid of these *Mittelstaaten* Rechberg wanted to secure them a share in the temporary administration of the Duchies. For this, he cleverly seized upon an expedient first suggested by Bismarck himself in an unguarded moment: the Diet should be requested to appoint a commissioner to sit with an Austrian and a Prussian as a triumvirate to administer the three Duchies united into one state, until the future sovereign could be chosen.⁵⁵ Bismarck had very soon regretted his original proposal,⁵⁶ and while in Vienna, he had urged in its stead a dual commission of Prussian and

⁵⁴ Rechberg made a sharp distinction in his dealings with the *Mittelstaaten*, between European questions and purely German questions. He was in harmony with Bismarck in repulsing interference from them in European affairs (Vogt pp. 14, 40) and had set his face against admitting the Diet to participation in the war, or peace negotiations in June and July (*G. W. IV*, p. 489). A somewhat softer attitude toward these states was shown in Rechberg's letter of September 19, 1864 to Bismarck (Sybel III, pp. 294-296).

⁵⁵ During the Karlsbad conversations, and in a note of June 29 (*G. W. IV*, pp. 480-482), Bismarck had proposed to Rechberg to invite the Diet to participate in the war. He wanted to array the full material support of Germany behind the allies, to prevent English intervention on behalf of the Danes. In order to induce the Diet to end the federal execution and place the federal forces (Saxons and Hanoverians) under the allied commander, Prince Friedrich Karl of Prussia, Bismarck was willing to allow the Diet to appoint a civil *Commissar*. Since the latter would share in the administration of Schleswig which lay outside the Confederation, Bismarck was here granting the Diet an extension of its authority! Rechberg did not wish to let the Diet join in the war nor in the peace, but accepted the proposal for a federal *Commissar*, provided certain changes were made in the wording of the bill to be presented in the Diet (*G. W. IV*, pp. 488-489). This hitherto unknown incident is omitted by Sybel except for a hint, III, p. 262.

⁵⁶ On July 7 (instructions to Werther, *G. W. IV*, p. 490) Bismarck shaved down the powers of the suggested federal *Commissar* until he was a mere dummy, receiving no instructions from the Diet and voting as Prussia and Austria told him to.

Austrian members only.⁵⁷ This was opposed by Rechberg on the excellent grounds that it would never pass the Diet.⁵⁸ In reality, he could not relinquish the pleasant prospect of placing the Duchies in the hands of a board of three, in which Austria would hold the balance of power. On August 4, a formal note went to Berlin bearing the Austrian proposition.⁵⁹

At the same time, Rechberg let the smaller states know that he was working for their interests, and that he was opposed to Prussia's desire for a long postponement of the succession settlement.⁶⁰ For these good offices, he gained the praise of statesmen both north and south of the Main: Platen of Hanover was at one with Schrenk of Bavaria and Hügel of Würtemberg in asserting new confidence in the Habsburg monarchy.⁶¹ Austria's apparently unselfish efforts for the cause of Germany contrasted with Prussia's more selfish ambitions.⁶²

Before the Austrian note had been delivered, Bismarck had already taken alarm at Rechberg's insistence on the participation of the Diet. The proposal of two pro-Augustenburg commissioners against one Prussian cut straight across Bismarck's well-laid plan to flood the Duchies with annexation propaganda in the expectation that, after the interim regime had dragged on for many weary months, they would drop like ripe plums into Prussia's lap.⁶³

⁵⁷ On July 29 (instructions to Werther, *G. W.* IV, pp. 521-523). Two things had wrought this change in Bismarck: the end of the war and the intervening cession of the Duchies by the Danes; and the increasing evidences of Austria's interest in the *Mittelstaaten* and Augustenburg.

⁵⁸ *G. W.* IV, p. 521.

⁵⁹ Rechberg to Chotek, August 4, 1864 (draft by Biegeleben). Contents indicated in Bismarck's reply of August 13 (*G. W.* IV, pp. 536-537).

⁶⁰ Sybel (III, p. 282) states that "Rechberg had very definitely promised several envoys of smaller states, that in the final settlement of the Schleswig-Holstein affair the German Confederation would not be ignored or excluded." Two months earlier, Rechberg seems to have promised the Grand Duke of Oldenburg (probably with an eye to Russian friendship) *not* to hurry the handling of the succession question in the Diet (Memorandum of Abeken, June 26, 1864: HAA).

⁶¹ Vitzthum p. 35; Sybel III, pp. 281-282; *Origines* IV, p. 91.

⁶² Sybel III, p. 281.

⁶³ These plans of Bismarck are well-known. Sybel, Friedjung, and Stern

In long and earnest instructions to Werther, Bismarck strained every nerve (and Abeken's rhetorical skill) to induce Rechberg and the Emperor to give up the dangerous demand, before the anti-Prussian currents in Vienna should become stronger. It was a fervent and classic appeal, this dispatch of August 6. It plead for the unity of the two powers in the leadership of the Confederation, and in the interest of conservative monarchical principles in Europe, as before 1848.⁶⁴ Bismarck declared that Austria and Prussia had every right to rule in the Duchies, the Diet had none. He exhorted Rechberg to join him in demanding at Frankfurt, the end of the Execution and the withdrawal of the federal troops, and urged him to name an Austrian commissioner at once, to take over the exclusive management of the Duchies in cooperation with a Prussian commissioner. Invoking the authority of the King himself behind these proposals, he presented them to Vienna in the most pressing words that one ally can use to another.⁶⁵

In order to leave no stone unturned, Bismarck followed up this official note with a more personal appeal to the Emperor. He knew from his Vienna observations that the majority of the court and the army still favored the Prussian alliance, at least platonically: the court on conservative monarchist grounds, the army, because of the recent companionship in arms.⁶⁶ To mobilize these circles against the Austrian move,

recognize them without hesitation. On Bismarck's desire for a long *provisorium*, see *G. W.* IV, p. 368, and *Origines* III, p. 241, IV, pp. 18, 56-57, 65, 119, 140. His dilatory tactics in the following autumn and winter (see below, chapter v) and his creation of a propaganda machine under Scheel-Plessen, Zedlitz, Richthofen, and Rössler (see below, chapter vi) merely carried out plans formed in the spring of 1864, if not earlier.

⁶⁴*G. W.* IV, pp. 525-531. It crossed with Rechberg's note.

⁶⁵It is significant, that in these instructions of August 6, 1864, and in a note of August 12, Bismarck begins—lightly to be sure, but unmistakably,—the long series of complaints of Austria's conduct in a tone of injured innocence, which, increasing gradually in vehemence, except for a hiatus in September 1865, come to an end with the war of 1866! (Complaint of August 6, *G. W.* IV, p. 527; of August 12, *G. W.* IV, p. 536).

⁶⁶Keudell, who reflected Bismarck's views, wrote to Max Duncker, that the Emperor and Rechberg still "seemed to expect more security for peace from the *entente* with Prussia than from the support of the petty courts and

he persuaded General Manteuffel, always *persona grata* in Vienna, to write privately to Crenneville, first adjutant-general of Franz Joseph.⁸⁷ In a "heart-outpouring," Manteuffel repeated in more colorful form, most of Bismarck's own arguments for Austro-Prussian solidarity. "When I was in Dresden last February," he wrote, "Beust said to me, 'When Austria and Prussia work together, my plans are destroyed—but will they remain together?' . . . In this question lies the Future." And the good Manteuffel, dipping his pen in tears, prayed God to avert so unthinkable a calamity.⁸⁸ Whether his prayer would be answered, remained to be seen.

Meanwhile, Rechberg's note of August 4, had reached Berlin, and a few days later, a telegram from Werther had announced the failure of Bismarck's forceful note to shake Rechberg's determination to secure a commissioner for the Diet.⁸⁹ The Austrian minister went farther, and urged that parliaments "Keudell had warned the Austrians against "playing the old game with the *Mittelstaaten*" again (*Duncker's Politischer Briefwechsel* pp. 382-383).

⁸⁷ After Manteuffel's mission to Vienna in February, 1864, Rechberg had written to Karolyi, "If ever again a disagreement should arise between Berlin and Vienna, may the King send back General Manteuffel at once." (Sybel III, p. 198). Manteuffel personally favored a closer alliance between Austria and Prussia, directed against France and Italy. He and General Crenneville, after meeting at Karlsbad in June, carried on an active correspondence concerned chiefly with military orders and decorations, but occasionally indulging in politics. The more formal of these letters are preserved in the Vienna *Kriegsarchiv* (*Militärkanzlei*) along with Crenneville's draft replies. The more personal and political letters, with very few exceptions, have been removed. It is not surprising, therefore, that Manteuffel's letter of August 12, 1864, and Crenneville's reply, are not found in the *Kriegsarchiv*.

⁸⁸ Manteuffel to Crenneville, Gastein August 12, 1864 (Poschinger: *Bismarck-Portefeuille* II, pp. 190-192). Accompanying notes show that Bismarck asked Manteuffel to write to Crenneville "on account of the increasingly involved situation in Vienna," and approved the letter afterward. William hesitated to have it sent and referred it back to Bismarck, who persisted in his desire that "under all circumstances . . . such a convincingly written letter should . . . reach its destination." There is no evidence to show that it was *not* sent. In fact, Manteuffel telegraphed Crenneville on August 12, after other business: "Letter follows" (*Kriegsarchiv: Militärkanzlei*).

⁸⁹ Werther's telegram of August 11, mentioned in Bismarck's dispatch of August 13 (*G. W. IV*, p. 537).

the two powers show courtesy to the Diet by informing it of the preliminary peace terms of August 1.⁷⁰ At the same time, he repeated his demand for the *Zollverein* concession.⁷¹ This avalanche was almost more than Bismarck could bear. Manteuffel found him depressed.⁷² Nevertheless, he determined to push the commercial matter further, for Rechberg's sake.⁷³ But he refused flatly to give the Diet the least chance to comment on the peace settlement,⁷⁴ or to share in the temporary government of the Duchies, especially since Beust's latest "villainy" (to which Bismarck devoted an entire dispatch).⁷⁵ "I can but deeply regret," he wrote on August 13,⁷⁶ "that it is impossible for us to accept the view of the imperial cabinet," and concluded with the hope that an understanding would be found more easily during the approaching visit of the King to the Kaiser. Bismarck was as firm in opposing "Austria's game with the *Mittelstaaten*" as Rechberg appeared to be consistent in opposing Prussian annexation.⁷⁷

On August 14, Rechberg (Biegeleben) had penned his rejoinder to the mountainous Berlin note of August 6.

Austria, too, he stated in substance, favored a conservative leadership in Germany hand in hand with Prussia. But the Emperor could not approve a harsh dictatorship based on "Rendsburg" tactics. "Austria and Prussia can neither give up the German Confederation, nor free themselves . . . from the conditions under which they live in the Confederation." Rechberg insisted upon a commission in which the Diet would have one of three members, and he reminded Bismarck that this was originally a Prussian suggestion. However, speaking for the Diet, he intimated that it

⁷⁰ Mentioned in Bismarck's dispatch of August 12 (*G. W. IV*, p. 536). Cf. Sybel III, p. 281.

⁷¹ Mentioned in a second dispatch of Bismarck's, of August 13 (*G. W. IV*, p. 539).

⁷² Manteuffel to Crenneville, August 12 (Poschinger II, p. 190).

⁷³ *G. W. IV*, pp. 539-540. Cf. p. 546.

⁷⁴ *G. W. IV*, p. 535.

⁷⁵ *G. W. IV*, pp. 538-539.

⁷⁶ Bismarck to Werther (*G. W. IV*, pp. 536-538). At the same time he stirred up the Berlin newspapers to attack the proposal (*Origines IV*, p. 36).

⁷⁷ Rechberg had rejected Bismarck's tempting overtures in May, his Oldenburg proposal in June, and his suggestions in July that each take part of the spoils.

might agree to a dual occupation by the two powers alone, provided "both powers tranquillize their confederates by a formal declaration that they intend no acquisitions for themselves, and only await the final decision of the *Bund* on the sovereignty question, before giving up the Duchies to their future lord."⁷⁸

In this way, Rechberg, unswayed by Bismarck's rhetoric, was impelled by Biegeleben to repair the mistake of January, and to try to wrest from Prussia the pledge of good conduct (renunciation of annexation) which he had neglected to secure seven months before.⁷⁹ In less than a week after peace had been signed, the divergence between the allies had thus become apparent, and in less than two weeks it had become serious.

In truth, both partners to the trial-marriage of January 16 had been guilty of infidelities. While correct in the letter, Rechberg's newest coquetry with the *Mittelstaaten*, his inclination to let them seek in Austria a protection against Prussia was contrary to the spirit of a true alliance. It savored of using outside pressure to force one's ally to adopt one's own point of view against his will. In this, Rechberg appeared to have borrowed a leaf from Schmerling's and Biegeleben's book.

But Austria had not been the first to make friends outside the alliance with the object of influencing the final settlement. The catalog of Bismarck's sins in this respect began earlier and was longer: his secret understanding with France to sabotage the Personal Union plan, after he had agreed with Rechberg to support it;⁸⁰ the manoeuvring in London to prevent Austria's Augustenburg solution from being accepted;⁸¹ the broad hints to Napoleon III and Alexander II, that an offer of the

⁷⁸ Rechberg to Chotek, August 14.

⁷⁹ The failure to include in the alliance protocol an article prohibiting Prussian annexation of the Duchies (See above, chapter II).

⁸⁰ Sybel III, pp. 224-225; *G. W.* IV, pp. 385-386. That the King was extremely reluctant to enter this deal with the "Erzfeind und unerforschlichen Führer desselben" and draw down the enmity of Austria, Germany, and other states ("Das ist mehr wie gefährlich!") is shown by his note of April 16, 1864 (*Anhang* I, pp. 108-109).

⁸¹ The rejection of Augustenburg had been contemplated in April in his arrangements with France (*G. W.* IV, pp. 385-386).

Duchies would be welcomed;⁸² the secret correspondence of King William with Augustenburg to extort Prussian overlordship;⁸³ the more recent negotiations with the Grand Duke of Oldenburg for the same purpose,⁸⁴ after Rechberg had shown his disinclination for that candidate; and finally the contemplated resumption of commercial negotiations with Austria's *bête-noir*, Italy.⁸⁵ Whether negotiating with France and Russia, or with Augustenburg and Oldenburg, the object was to prepare in secret an outcome which Austria was certain to dislike. Compared to this, Rechberg's open *rapprochement* with the *Mittelstaaten*, and even his secret warnings to both candidates not to become Prussia's vassals,⁸⁶ were the more innocuous infidelities.⁸⁷

⁸² Certainly calculated to force Austria's hand. The hint to Napoleon in Bismarck's instructions to Goltz, April 17, 1864 (*G. W.* IV p. 386). The broader hint to Alexander in Karlsbad was rebuffed in June (*G. W.* IV, p. 460; Sybel III, p. 254), but partially acted upon in November (Jansen-Samwer pp. 409-410; *Origines* V, p. 95).

⁸³ These negotiations were opened by Augustenburg, who took the hint from a remark of Bismarck's in February. In April, William suggested this secret correspondence "zwischen Furst und Furst." (Jansen-Samwer pp. 320-328).

⁸⁴ Documents in a special packet in HAA, Berlin. Dr. Thimme, editor of the *G. W.* IV, V, and VI, has omitted documents relating to these secret negotiations with Oldenburg. Bismarck's purpose in them is humorously described by Jansen-Samwer (p. 372): "The unlawful candidate [Oldenburg] would be used to drive out the most lawful [Augustenburg] in order finally to turn over the territory to the least lawful of all [Prussia]."

⁸⁵ *G. W.* IV, pp. 484-485. Bismarck writes: "I have become convinced from my interviews with Rechberg [in Karlsbad] . . . how much Austria would dislike to see such a [treaty]." But he thought that "good political relations with Austria at this moment are strong enough to remain undisturbed by such a step. . . ." He sought to make Saxony an accomplice in this move.

⁸⁶ The warning to Augustenburg on May 26. Presumably Franz Joseph gave the warning to Oldenburg, about June 18. Oldenburg's agent, Leverkus, told Abeken: "Austria said, in Kissingen, that if the Grand Duke were to have any chance at all, he would be expected not to oppose Austrian policy and the interests Austria pursues in the North . . . Austria made no more definite demands." (Memorandum of Abeken, June 26, 1864: HAA).

⁸⁷ It should be repeated, that Rechberg did not desire to intrigue on a large scale against Prussia, nor was he adept enough. That he was more *scrupulous* than Bismarck is to be doubted.

Thus the "struggle for the spoils" had begun, and the question was, which ally would yield to the other? Or would a compromise be found? Could the apple of discord, Schleswig-Holstein, the token of Austro-Prussian divergence, be transformed into a symbol of Austro-Prussian solidarity, in the intimate atmosphere of monarchical conviviality at Schönbrunn?

THE SCHÖNBRUNN CONVERSATIONS

"The Austrians must be handled with care and catered to in outward formalities, if we don't wish to make it difficult for the Emperor to second our plans," wrote one of Bismarck's secretaries, expressing his master's sentiments.⁸⁸ Franz Joseph had extended to King William an invitation to visit him at Schönbrunn, and Bismarck was striving to overcome William's desire to postpone the visit until after he had taken his third "cure" at Baden-Baden.⁸⁹ The Prussian minister finally prevailed upon his sovereign for courtesy's sake, to return the Kaiser's June visit without delay.⁹⁰

For other reasons too, an intimate conference seemed desirable to Bismarck. He wished to find out for himself how far the anti-Prussian influences in Vienna had swerved the Emperor from the true alliance-policy, and under what conditions he could persuade him to relinquish Austria's half-ownership of the Duchies. In broaching this theme, Bismarck also hoped at last to force his own king, as well as his ally, to take a definite stand on the annexation question. He knew that William was ready to exact from the future sovereign, if one were in-

⁸⁸ Keudell to Duncker, August 3, 1864 (*Max Duncker's Politischer Briefwechsel* p. 282 f.).

⁸⁹ To leave Austrian soil without paying a visit to the Austrian sovereign would have been a breach of official etiquette. "The [Austrian] court and the army would see in such an act an unpardonable lack of courtesy," wrote Keudell (Duncker p. 282 f.). See also Roon: *Denkwürdigkeiten* II, p. 265.

⁹⁰ Franz Joseph had called upon William at Karlsbad between June 22 and 24, 1864, on which occasion he had conferred upon Bismarck the Grand Cross of St. Stephen (Horst Kohl: *Bismarck-Regesten* I, p. 234; *Kriegsarchiv: Militärkanzlei*).

stalled, a heavy payment in military, naval, and commercial concessions to Prussia. But as yet Bismarck had not succeeded in overcoming William's scruples against annexation, except as to tiny Lauenburg. In fact, there were signs that Augustenburg had regained some of the favor he had lost through Bismarck's exploitation of the June interview.⁹¹

Whichever way the King should decide at Schönbrunn, Bismarck felt sure that he held the means, both legal and military, to force Austria sooner or later to accept what he wanted. All that Prussia needed to do, as he had frankly told Augustenburg, was to stay in the Duchies until Austria came to terms.⁹² Time would work in Prussia's favor, for the expense of keeping troops in the far north would mount up to heights which Austria did not wish to contemplate, either in her own budget or in that of her ward. At the same time Bismarck's agents of propaganda could make the most of the existing uncertainty and, in a year or so, convert the good Schleswig-Holsteiners into annexationists, whose appeals France and Russia could not oppose.⁹³ In the last analysis Bismarck did not fear a war, while Rechberg and Franz Joseph did. Prussia's position was in this sense stronger than Austria's.

In Vienna, the one desire was to dispose of the troublesome Duchies as quickly and as profitably as possible. All states-

⁹¹ Augustenburg had tried to wipe out the bad effects of Bismarck's distortion of the interview of June 1, by a most conciliatory letter to William dated June 20, and a public speech of June 22, in which he clearly expressed his desire to grant Prussia far-reaching concessions. On August 14, William had urged Augustenburg to present his claims to the Diet not later than Oldenburg did. This was interpreted as a friendly gesture (Gebauer: *Herzog Friedrich VIII. von Schleswig-Holstein* pp. 117, 122).

⁹² Jansen-Samwer p. 735. Cf. Bismarck's letter to William, October 10, 1864: "Solange unsere Interessen nicht vollständig sichergestellt sind, würden wir den Besitz von Schleswig nur festzuhalten haben, um uns ein ausserhalb des Bundes belegenes Pfand unserer Ansprüche zu sichern. . . ." (G. W. IV, p. 570).

⁹³ The ardor of the Schleswig-Holsteiners for Augustenburg was already showing signs of cooling (*Origines* IV, pp. 29, 31). But they were by no means inclined as yet to become Prussian (*Ibid.* IV, p. 40). The Austrians were not blind to the danger (Apponyi to Rechberg, letter of May 19, 1864: Steefel: *The Schleswig-Holstein Question* p. 340).

men there were united,—Biegeleben and Schmerling, Rechberg and Franz Joseph,—in the determination to secure a settlement that would maintain Austrian predominance and the existing balance of power in Germany. In other words, if Prussia obtained an increase of territory or power, Austria must gain equal profits from the venture.

Biegeleben insisted that Prussia herself must provide Austria with the equivalent compensation, viz., territory in Silesia,⁹⁴ a suggestion in which he saw the means of blocking annexation under a plausible pretext.⁹⁵ Schmerling wanted Augustenburg at all costs, and, content to leave his cause in the hands of Biegeleben during the impending conferences, he thought it an appropriate time to take a month's vacation from Vienna.⁹⁶ Rechberg preferred, if possible, to obtain Prussia's promise of help in case Venetia were attacked.⁹⁷ Undoubtedly this was also the solution closest to the Emperor's heart.⁹⁸ But as such a pact of guarantee had often been refused by Prussia, Rechberg doubtless set his mind at work to find a compromise formula which could be brought up as a last resort if all else failed. Convinced that the Duchies would inevitably gravitate toward Prussia sooner or later, he wished to obtain some reward that Prussia would willingly offer. Probably no one realized more clearly than Rechberg, that through the overhasty alliance of January 16, with its article 5,⁹⁹ Bis-

⁹⁴ In October he suggested the Hohenzollern Principalities also (See his memorandum for Franz Joseph, October 19, 1864, in Engel-Janosi: *Rechberg*, p. 125 f.).

⁹⁵ Engel-Janosi p. 126; also *Allgemeine Zeitung*, No. 365, "Wien, 28 December" (inspired article).

⁹⁶ Schmerling's last attendance at the minister council sessions was on August 12, his first reappearance on September 15. During August and part of September, Rechberg was acting chairman of the council, in place of Archduke Rainer.

⁹⁷ *Friedjung II*, p. 589; Engel-Janosi p. 149.

⁹⁸ Hassel: *Aus dem Leben des Königs Albert von Sachsen II*, p. 215.

⁹⁹ It will be recalled that article 5 provided that any settlement of the Schleswig-Holstein question, to be valid, must have the consent of both Prussia and Austria.

marck had caught Austria in a trap from which she would have to pay well to escape.

Though such thoughts filled the political minds in the *Ballplatz*, they did not lessen the cordiality with which Franz Joseph welcomed King William at Schönbrunn on August 20.¹⁰⁰ Attired in the Prussian colonel's uniform, the young Emperor went forth with his suite to meet his fellow monarch, twice his age, who was accompanied by Bismarck and a retinue of Prussian officers.¹⁰¹ Housed in the favorite suburban palace of Maria Theresa, the monarchs could enjoy more privacy and freedom from the ill-feeling of the Viennese than in the *Hofburg* itself.¹⁰²

For five days the Austrians provided a series of regal entertainments, a review of 15,000 troops, banquets, *théâtre paré*, gala opera, and two hunting parties,¹⁰³ while the public scanned the newspapers for the meager accounts which filtered through the palace gates. A single detail from the description of the great stag hunt arrests the eye: "Herr von Bismarck, well-known as an excellent shot, . . . awakened much admiration for the accuracy with which he brought down the largest ani-

¹⁰⁰ This date, given in Kohl: *Bismarck-Regesten* I, p. 238, relying on *Bismarckbriefe 1836-1873* p. 172, is substantiated in *Origines* IV, p. 48; *Briefe Kaiser Franz Josephs I. an seine Mutter* p. 337; and by the official program for the Schönbrunn festivities (*Kriegsarchiv: Militärkanzlei*). The wrong date of August 22, more or less definitely given by Sybel III, p. 283; Friedjung: *Kampf* I, p. 97; Lenz *Bismarck* p. 256; and Erich Marcks: *Kaiser Wilhelm I.* p. 244, thus needs correction in their works.

¹⁰¹ King William wore the uniform of an Austrian colonel. With him were also Generals Manteuffel and Alvensleben, two lieutenant-colonels, the *Oberhofmarschall*, Count Pückler, Geheimräte Illaire and Noel of William's secret civil cabinet, his personal physician, his "travel-postmaster," and several secretaries. With Bismarck were Abeken and Keudell. (List of the Prussian suite, in *Kriegsarchiv: Militärkanzlei*).

¹⁰² Rooms in the Vienna palace were, however, assigned to several members of the party, including Bismarck and Manteuffel, in addition to their Schönbrunn quarters. Baron Werther, the Prussian envoy, was housed at Schönbrunn (Engraved lists of room-assignments, in *Kriegsarchiv: Militärkanzlei*). Cf. A. Memor: *L'Allemagne nouvelle* p. 143.

¹⁰³ List of festivities, in *Kriegsarchiv: Militärkanzlei*; see also, *Briefe Kaiser Franz Josephs I. an seine Mutter* p. 337; Kohl: *Bismarck-Regesten* I, p. 238; *Origines* IV, p. 48 f.; Memor pp. 135-140.

mal of today's hunt. . . ."¹⁰⁴ With equal assurance the same huntsman intended to bag the largest prize in the political stag-hunt with Austria.

Before tackling the fate of the Duchies, however, Bismarck and Rechberg, between hunts and dinners, tried to clean from the slate a host of lesser problems. The Rendsburg incident, the Hamburg telegraph treaties, the temporary administration of the Duchies, the *Zollverein* negotiations,—all these could have been quickly settled between friends who saw eye to eye. But they proved difficult to compromise between these ministers of allied, but rival states, for underlying each one was the question of the relationship of the two powers to the smaller states, and here as always Rechberg begged for moderation, while Bismarck wished to show no mercy.¹⁰⁵ A very grudging concession in the *Zollverein* negotiations registered the extreme limit of condescension from Austria's guest.¹⁰⁶ Such poor results in secondary matters boded ill for the settlement of the great question at issue.

All Germany feared the worst, and held its breath. The Vienna *Presse* noted the sudden change in Austrian policy from "carefully observed publicity" to complete secrecy: "Even the best-informed do not know whether Austria has made an about-face, as she is accused of doing, whether she has decided to submit to Prussia's 'guidance,' whether she has exchanged her former good connections with the *Mittelstaaten* for tense relations, or whether she knows at all what she wants and what she can get."¹⁰⁷ Beust, the busy-body of Saxony, suspected that the two powers were plotting to divide up Ger-

¹⁰⁴ *Allgemeine Zeitung* 1864, No. 239, "Wien 24 August."

¹⁰⁵ With more irony than accuracy, the Biegeleben clique in the *Ballplatz* congratulated themselves that no more questions had come up for settlement, else Rechberg would have yielded still more to Prussia! (Vogt p. 44 note 2).

¹⁰⁶ Sybel III, pp. 287-288. Bismarck agreed to use his influence in Berlin, to reopen negotiations with Austria as to future tariff-union. He was careful not to promise to *secure* such a union, but only to resume discussions. For the subsequent course of these negotiations, see below, chapter iv.

¹⁰⁷ *Allgemeine Zeitung* 1864, No. 239, "Wien 24 August." (This correspondent was usually well-informed, often officially).

many at the Main river, and he sent his trusty henchman, Vitzthum von Eckstädt, post-haste to Hanover, to find out how the second largest state in North Germany would react to such a danger.¹⁰⁸ France and Italy feared with good reason a closer alliance which might thwart Italian hopes of winning Venice. England looked on sullenly. Only the Tsar Alexander warmly desired the continuance of friendship between the two German powers.¹⁰⁹

The veil of mystery has never been completely lifted from these intimate conferences of monarchs and ministers.¹¹⁰ No one of the participants seems to have cared to note down a full account of the questions and replies, the proposals and counter-proposals, the remarks that passed between them on this vital question of the Duchies and the future of the Austro-Prussian alliance. Bismarck's oft-told tale of the conversation *à quatre*, and Rechberg's story of the midnight treaty are, in the one case, so closely interwoven with statements contrary to fact,¹¹¹ and in the other case, so vague in important details,¹¹² and in both cases a certain *Tendenz* is so obvious,¹¹³ that these stories must be read with caution. Nevertheless, by piecing together many fragmentary bits of information, especially the impor-

¹⁰⁸ Vitzthum von Eckstädt: *London, Gastein, und Sadowa, 1864-1866*, p. 177 f. Not long after, Beust himself made the tour of South Germany, to galvanize these states into action to resist any encroachment on their sovereignty. His wanderings may be traced in *Origines* IV, pp. 50-51 ff.

¹⁰⁹ Cf. Alexander's words to Bismarck, June 10 (*G. W.* IV, p. 460).

¹¹⁰ A list of published and unpublished sources for these conversations at Schönbrunn is given in Appendix B. They will be cited here by number only.

¹¹¹ For instance, in Bismarck's interview with Friedjung (No. 18, Appendix B) he declared that in 1864, both he and King William would gladly have guaranteed Venetia to Austria in return for the Duchies. For the incorrectness of this statement, see Appendix B, Nos. 4, 9, and 12.

¹¹² For instance, whether the treaty was a general offensive and defensive alliance, or merely a defensive alliance against France, whether it contained provisions about Schleswig-Holstein or not, etc. See Appendix B, Nos. 16, 17, and 20.

¹¹³ Both Bismarck and Rechberg in later years were anxious to emphasize their attempts in 1864 to preserve good relations, Bismarck in the interest of the later Triple Alliance policy, Rechberg to answer attacks on his diplomacy, which was held to have brought on the war of 1866.

tant new revelations from Rechberg's letters,¹¹⁴ it is now possible to paint the picture of these Schönbrunn conferences with surer strokes than heretofore.¹¹⁵

About the third day the Austrians felt that the time had arrived to begin discreet soundings in the dark waters of Prussian expectations.¹¹⁶ In a secluded room of the palace, Franz Joseph seized the opportunity to draw his guest into a discussion of European politics. (Bismarck and Rechberg were the only other persons present). The Kaiser expressed his conviction that the situation in Germany and Europe, as well as the highest moral and political interests of the allies, militated against a "selfish" solution of the Schleswig-Holstein question.¹¹⁷ France was always waiting for an opportunity to interfere in German affairs and to fish in troubled waters.

"One should never trust Napoleon under any circumstances," said the Kaiser with feeling, "for in his political projects he always pursues more than one aim at a time"¹¹⁸

¹¹⁴ Published in 1927 by Friedrich Engel-Janosi: *Graf Rechberg: Vier Kapitel zu seiner und Oesterreichs Geschichte*, based on material from the Rechberg archives, the HHS, and the HAA. (See No. 14 in Appendix B.)

¹¹⁵ Sybel's sketchy account (volume III, pp. 283-284) seems to have been pieced together from the meager sources in the Prussian archives (see Appendix B, Nos. 1, 5, 8, 10, and 12) and liberal guesses based on previous and subsequent negotiations. Possibly he obtained some information from Bismarck in the 'eighties.—Friedjung's account is based upon his interviews with Bismarck and Rechberg in 1889 and 1890 (Appendix B, Nos. 17 and 18).—Stern's brief summary (volume IX, p. 387) is a conservative and careful digest of previously published material. He did not use sources Nos. 1, 2, 4, 6, 9, 11, 13, and 14, Appendix B. He avoids an explicit statement as to whether Rechberg asked for a guarantee of Venetia.—The Vienna archives have yielded little of importance (Nos. 9, 10, 11, 13), and the British archives nothing.—For a careful appraisal of several of the printed sources, Robert Fahncke: *Die Parallel-Erzählungen Bismarcks* pp. 102-105.

¹¹⁶ Kohl: *Bismarck-Regesten* I, p. 238, and Bismarck: *Gedanken und Erinnerungen* I, p. 373, give August 22 as the date of this conversation, but cite no sources for this date. It is probable that during the five days of the visit (Sybel wrongly says *three* days) there occurred a number of such private discussions, which can hardly be disentangled from one another. The present account like its predecessors should be considered a composite of several exchanges of ideas among the four men.

¹¹⁷ Appendix B, No. 10.

¹¹⁸ Appendix B, No. 8, whence Sybel III, p. 283.

Franz Joseph's fear of French intrigues was equalled by his warm desire to continue the Prussian alliance, which he considered of paramount importance for the maintenance of European stability, and order in Germany.¹¹⁹

In the course of the conversation, Bismarck seized upon this latter theme, and appealed to Franz Joseph in terms calculated to impress that enthusiastic huntsman.

"Our alliance," he said, "... is like a hunting party, in which each takes home his own share of the spoils. If, later on, we should make war together against France and Italy, and with Prussia's aid Milan should fall again into Austrian hands, Prussia would not ask for a land-equivalent, but would accept a money indemnity for her war efforts."¹²⁰

The insinuation was obvious: Bismarck wished to purchase the Duchies. In Franz Joseph's mind this seductive picture of a *coup de grâce* to revolutionary France and Italy must have battled with memories of Prussia's "betrayal" in 1859. Moreover, what comfort was there for Franz Joseph's excited Viennese subjects in Bismarck's proposal?—The Emperor called attention to the necessity, in view of public opinion in Austria, of gaining an acceptable equivalent, if Prussia were to obtain so great a prize as Schleswig-Holstein.¹²¹ It was then hinted that certain border counties in Silesia, peopled by Austrian settlers, would prove a satisfactory object of exchange.¹²² Thinking it well to obtain a positive declaration from the King, whose real desires were as much of a mystery to the Austrians, of course, as to Bismarck, Franz Joseph suddenly turned to him and asked point blank whether he was determined to annex the Duchies. Or would he be satisfied with certain rights in them?¹²³

Forced at last to declare himself, William showed his unpreparedness. With some hesitation, he replied that he really had no right to the Duchies,¹²⁴ though if they were definitely

¹¹⁹ Sybel III, p. 283, probably derived from No. 5, Appendix B.

¹²⁰ Appendix B, No. 18. Variants in Nos. 19, 20, and 21.

¹²¹ Appendix B, No. 19.

¹²² Appendix B, Nos. 18 and 19.

¹²³ Appendix B, No. 19. Variants: Nos. 18, and 21.

¹²⁴ Appendix B, Nos. 15, 18, 19.

offered to him, he could hardly refuse them.¹²⁵ But he certainly could not afford to give up Prussian land and citizens for them.¹²⁶ The truth was, that his conscience forbade him as yet to step forth as a selfish conqueror.¹²⁷ Had he replied with a bold affirmative, as Bismarck hoped, Franz Joseph would probably have extended the "outright offer" William desired and coupled it with a polite but firm request for a guarantee of Venetia.¹²⁸ As it was, William's hesitancy was a check for Bismarck,¹²⁹ of which the Emperor made a mental note.¹³⁰ The latter decided to leave any further soundings to Rechberg in private, and turned the conversation into other channels.

Biegeleben's proposed land-exchange had thus been flatly rejected, and Rechberg was free to try his luck at securing his own favorite plan of a mutual treaty of protection and assistance, to safeguard the Italian possessions. Repeatedly in 1859-1861, it will be recalled, Rechberg had tried to obtain Prussia's binding promise of aid if Venetia were attacked.¹³¹ But the Hohenzollern had refused to put on such a tunic of Nessus, and retorted with an offer of *restricted* aid, for a price—the division of German hegemony with the Habsburg—which seemed to Franz Joseph too costly an insurance rate, even for the pearl of the Adriatic. After 1861 therefore, Austria disregarded further hints from Berlin,¹³² and turned to the Diet to obtain a federal guarantee.¹³³ The leading *Mittel-*

¹²⁵ Appendix B, No. 6.

¹²⁶ Appendix B, Nos. 18 and 19.

¹²⁷ Appendix B, No. 12, whence Sybel III, p. 284.

¹²⁸ It seems probable that the question of Venetia was not brought up *between the two monarchs* (Sybel III, p. 284 to the contrary notwithstanding). If Bismarck personally told Sybel that it *was* discussed at this interview (of which we have no evidence), he told Friedjung that it was *not* (See No. 18, Appendix B).

¹²⁹ Appendix B, Nos. 18, 19, and 21.

¹³⁰ Appendix B, No. 10.

¹³¹ See above, chapter i; and Zechlin: *Bismarck und die Grundlegung der deutschen Grossmacht* pp. 56-59, and the literature there cited.

¹³² Bismarck's overtures to Karolyi, December 4, 1862 (*G. W.* VII, pp. 69-72).

¹³³ Austrian reply to Beust's federal reform plan (*Staatsarchiv* II, p. 123; *Stern* VIII, p. 464; Sybel II, p. 303).

staaten were distinctly favorable. Already in 1860 Bavaria and Württemberg had tried to persuade Prussia to initiate in the Diet a federal guarantee for Venetia.¹⁸⁴ Even without Prussia they were willing to support Austria in such a contingency.¹⁸⁵ At the *Fürstentag* in Frankfurt, Franz Joseph had proposed that the reconstructed Diet, by a majority vote, should decide whether to bring collective aid to Austria in Italy. But Prussia again had spoiled the plan by refusing to come to Frankfurt at all.

The Schleswig-Holstein crisis of November 1863 and the diplomatic revolution in Austro-Prussian relations at that time had brought new possibilities to the fore. It was Bismarck himself who had pointed to the Duchies as a new object of Prussian ambitions. He had sought to revive Austria's hopes for a Prussian guarantee in exchange for them.¹⁸⁶ His hints were far rosier than his intentions,¹⁸⁷ as Rechberg perhaps perceived. At any rate, so long as the war with Denmark was still unfinished, the Austrian minister had declined to discuss a combination which he feared might provoke France and alienate England and Russia. Prussia, he said, should wait. Some day the great and inevitable struggle against France and the "revolution" would supply her with a territorial increase. The present was not the time.¹⁸⁸

But the Danish war had ended without such foreign complications. From Rechberg's contacts with Bismarck at Karlsbad and Vienna he had learned to appreciate the latter's deter-

¹⁸⁴ Stern VIII, p. 453; Hengelmüller: "Graf Alois Karolyi," in *Deutsche Revue* XXXVIII, 1913, Heft 3, p. 34.

¹⁸⁵ This promise was secured by Count Blome in 1861 (Hengelmüller, *loc. cit.*, pp. 168-169).

¹⁸⁶ In 1848 Prussia had cast her eyes toward the Duchies; but Bismarck was the first to couple this objective with Venetia, in interviews with Karolyi on January 14, and with Chotek on May 14, 1864.

¹⁸⁷ See his instructions to Manteuffel, February 21, 1864; no guarantee of Venetia, only verbal assurances (*G. W.* IV, p. 335).

¹⁸⁸ *G. W.* IV, p. 412, note 3, and Sybel III, p. 243. Rechberg here did not intend a future annexation of Schleswig-Holstein, but an increase at France's expense, possibly a wink toward Alsace!

mination and strength of purpose. Now Bismarck had come to Schönbrunn, eager for the Duchies, and enthusiastic for the continuance of the alliance. It was one of the most favorable opportunities that Rechberg had had in all his five years of office, to obtain the coveted guarantee for Venetia.

In conversation with Bismarck, Rechberg confessed that he understood Prussia's repugnance to the creation of an additional petty state in North Germany.¹³⁹ He declared his willingness at last to abandon the Duchies to Prussia, if William in return would enter a formal alliance by which each sovereign would protect the possessions of the other.¹⁴⁰ Rechberg could not have done better than to recall Bismarck's sweeping offer of May 1864: "Yes," the Prussian minister had said, "we would even give you a guarantee of the entire Austrian territory."¹⁴¹ At that critical time, Austria's continued support against the Danes had been worth all the inducements Bismarck could invent. But now his ally demanded pure coin. The King's vacillation showed him that William as yet was not ready to pay very much for the Duchies. Bismarck's present reply was therefore pitched in a lower key:

"A treaty with Austria," he said to Rechberg, "would be either eventual or definitive; if only eventual, Austria would not gain very much, for it would always depend on Prussia to decide whether the *casus foederis* had arisen or not; on the other hand, if it were a definitive treaty, all the disadvantages would be on Prussia's side, for Austria would only need to cause the questions to arise which the treaty foresaw, in order to bring on the war."¹⁴² Why not simply continue the double ownership of the Duchies, he said, until a new constellation in Europe would make the alliance more popular than it is today, and provide other means of settling the question?¹⁴³

¹³⁹ Appendix B, No. 16.

¹⁴⁰ Appendix B, Nos. 4, 9, 12, 14, 16, and 17. In 1890, Bismarck told Friedjung he did not remember an Austrian demand for a guarantee, at Schönbrunn. Perhaps this was because the demand was not made at the monarch's conference, the details of which remained clearly in Bismarck's mind to the exclusion of other events at Schönbrunn.

¹⁴¹ Chotek to Rechberg, May 15, 1864 (Steefel p. 324).

¹⁴² Appendix B, No. 9.

¹⁴³ Free rendering of No. 13, Appendix B.

Bismarck sought, as Biegeleben aptly expressed it, to persuade Austria "with her own hand to help undermine her position in Germany merely in order not to lose the uncertain prospect of Prussia's alliance in a future war."¹⁴⁴ It was an echo of Rechberg's own "Wait!", but it fell on deaf ears now, for the Austrian minister, conscious of the hostile advice that Biegeleben was pouring into Franz Joseph's ear even during these Schönbrunn days,¹⁴⁵ could not afford to let the Prussians depart without straining every resource to obtain something tangible from the alliance and the war.

The last evening of the Prussian visit had arrived, and the guests were scheduled to depart the following morning. The sovereigns wished to put the seal upon their conferences by some written agreement of the sort that had consolidated their common undertaking in the preceding January, March, and June. Their ministers, detailed to draw up such a protocol, retired by themselves for a last exploration of all possibilities, while William in his own apartments sat up till after midnight nervously awaiting the conclusion of their conference.¹⁴⁶

Rechberg now returned vigorously to the attack. He expressed his conviction that if the two countries held together no shot could be fired in Europe without their consent.¹⁴⁷ To give concrete expression to this idea, he urged upon Bismarck not his former all-inclusive guarantee, but a limited alliance of the kind that William himself had proposed to Franz Joseph

¹⁴⁴ Engel-Janosi: *Rechberg* p. 126

¹⁴⁵ Biegeleben was called into consultation at Schönbrunn during the conferences (*Allgemeine Zeitung*, No. 239, "Wien 24 August", Engel-Janosi: *Rechberg* p. 142), and we know that "in German affairs he possessed the ear of Franz Joseph" (Rechberg's words, in Friedjung: *Kampf* II, p. 585).

¹⁴⁶ Appendix B, No. 1.

¹⁴⁷ The three sources for this "midnight treaty" incident all emanated from Rechberg in his later years (Appendix B, Nos. 16, 17, and 20). Friedjung's account (No. 17) is the fullest and probably the most accurate, though Schulte's (No. 16) contains some additional and valuable details. The *Neue Freie Presse* interview (No. 20) is exaggerated, inaccurate, and confused.

at Teplitz in 1860, and again indirectly in 1863: a defensive alliance against France.¹⁴⁸

"But our internal situation," said Bismarck, "demands . . . a war abroad."

"Napoleon," replied Rechberg, "is in the same position, and wont long be able to hold down his opposition without a successful war. Then a conflagration will arise in Europe, and we can strike France down."¹⁴⁹

Bismarck hesitated.¹⁵⁰ If Napoleon got wind of such a treaty, his wrath, now directed solely against Austria, would fall upon Prussia as well, and for better or for worse Bismarck would have to go hand in hand with the Habsburg, whose constancy could not be relied on *à toute épreuve*. Nevertheless he thought it worth talking over.¹⁵¹ Out of their *tête-à-tête* sprang a novel plan, whether from Rechberg's anxious brain or from Bismarck's more inventive mind may never be known.¹⁵² The central idea was astonishingly simple: to divide the Duchies, Prussia annexing Schleswig, outside the pale of the confederation, Austria taking Holstein and Lauenburg. By thus offering up the "legal" viewpoint and the Duke of Augustenburg, Franz Joseph would at one stroke sever his ties with the *Mittelstaaten* and deal a heavy blow to the Biegleben-Schmerling influences. Rechberg hoped in this way to

¹⁴⁸ The Teplitz offer: Sybel II, pp. 270-271; Oncken: *Friedrich von Baden* I, pp. 198-201.—The offer of 1863, in a letter to Leopold of Belgium: *Letters of Queen Victoria*, second series I, p. 106.

¹⁴⁹ Appendix B, No. 17.

¹⁵⁰ Appendix B, Nos. 16 and 20.

¹⁵¹ Appendix B, No. 20.

¹⁵² Rechberg always gave the impression that this treaty-plan (and by inference, its partition-idea) was his own creation, though he never explicitly stated so (See Nos. 14, 16, 17, and 20). Both he and Bismarck had an impelling motive to find such a compromise. But while Rechberg's desire for it was the stronger, his resourcefulness was far inferior to Bismarck's. More probably Bismarck suggested the partition, and Rechberg elaborated the terms of the treaty. It was but a step from Bismarck's July suggestion of the Lauenburg and Friesian Islands annexation to the present plan. Rechberg had not been personally opposed to the former in principle.

give Prussia substantial proof of Austria's sincerity, and a *quid pro quo* for the anti-French pact.¹⁵³

But the division of the spoils was not to be the ultimate arrangement. Rechberg noted down the following proviso:¹⁵⁴

"In the event of Austria's acquiring further accessions of territory or reconquering former provinces with Prussia's aid, Holstein and Lauenburg should be ceded to Prussia as indemnification. But whereas the existing balance of power in Germany might not be altered to the disadvantage of Austria, she should be allowed to enter the German Confederation with a corresponding share of her possessions on the Adriatic coast."¹⁵⁵

Linked up with the defensive alliance, this was an ingenious plan, showing traces of its double parentage, and no less advantageous for Austria than for Prussia. If carried out with courage and sincerity, it meant the knitting of Prussia more closely to Austria, in gratitude for present gains and in the hope of future additions. Prussia did not, to be sure, give a complete guarantee for Venetia; she did not agree to help Austria if Italy alone attacked. But in such a case, Austria could easily handle the situation.¹⁵⁶ If France aided Italy, then Prussia was bound to stand by her ally.

The scheme did, it is true, leave a large loop-hole. It could not have prevented the combination which brought on the war of 1866, an alliance of Italy and Prussia, with the tacit consent but without the active aid of France. If Bismarck wished to play for higher stakes than the Duchies,¹⁵⁷ then the present

¹⁵³ As we know, Rechberg had favored a "political" solution since May, and had espoused Augustenburg for his political advantages rather than his legal rights (Appendix A, No. 2). The present plan represented no change in his principles therefore.

¹⁵⁴ The citation in Rechberg's letter of January 9, 1867 to his brother (Appendix B, No. 14) reads as though written with some formal document before his eyes. No trace of such a draft-treaty seems to have been found by Engel-Janosi among the Rechberg papers, and it does not exist in the Rechberg *Nachlass* in HHS.

¹⁵⁵ Appendix B, No. 14.

¹⁵⁶ Cf. Rechberg's words to Gramont (*Origines* III, p. 372). Rechberg's disparagement of a Prussian guarantee before Gramont was obviously calculated to throw France off the scent.

¹⁵⁷ Viz the exclusion of Austria from German politics and influence.

scheme could not keep him from it. Only a fearless, frank, and unreserved espousal of the Rechberg policy, and the complete elimination of Biegeleben and the Great-Germanist influences, only cooperation with Prussia on a more dualistic basis could have seriously undermined Bismarck's inmost desires.

If the "midnight treaty" was not a certain war preventive, it was nevertheless a friction eliminator. It would throw William and Franz Joseph into each other's arms instead of dividing them. By the defensive alliance, Prussia burned her bridges to Napoleon, and by the partition, Austria burned her bridges to the *Mittelstaaten*. Both sovereigns would reap the whirlwind of public opinion throughout Germany and western Europe against this "Polish partition" of the "indivisible Duchies," and would have to seek safety and solace in each other's alliance. Moreover, Bismarck and his King loved Austria in proportion to what they could gain from her, naturally enough. To annex Schleswig would give Bismarck a stronger hold on the King's favor. It would undermine William's deeply rooted feeling that Austria since 1763 had always fought Prussia's growth tooth and nail.¹⁵⁸ It would encourage him to prefer the prospect of modest gains (Holstein) in cooperation with his brother sovereign, to the more substantial fruits of war waged with the aid of the inscrutable enemy on the Seine.¹⁵⁹ Equally important as a harmonizing influence, would be the elimination of the Prince of Augustenburg. By dividing the spoils, the two victors might have made the Duchies a bond of friendship between them, at least for the time being.

When Bismarck had given his tentative approval to this Austro-Prussian program,¹⁶⁰ Rechberg hastily summoned Biegeleben, though it was late in the night, and asked him to draft

¹⁵⁸ Sybel IV, p. 123.

¹⁵⁹ "It is highly probable," said Rechberg in after years, "that King William could not have been induced to attack [Austria], if Schleswig-Holstein had been given over to him" (Friedjung II, p. 590).

¹⁶⁰ We have only Rechberg's word for Bismarck's approval (Nos. 14, 17, Appendix B), but that Bismarck certainly approved the partition is clear from his revival of it in December-January and July 1865.

a formal convention embodying the points agreed on.¹⁶¹ Biegeleben refused flatly to have anything to do with it,¹⁶² complaining that Austria would thereby run into a fracas with France, and still not be able to rely on Prussia.¹⁶³ "Then I'll draft it myself," said Rechberg,¹⁶⁴ disregarding the fateful omen of the *Hofrat's* disapproval.

The sequel, so far as we can tell, ran somewhat as follows: the partition-and-alliance project, whether in finished form or merely as heads of proposals, was submitted by each minister to his sovereign.¹⁶⁵ At this late hour of night King William was in no friendly mood, and declined to sign such an agreement.¹⁶⁶ He had always expected to obtain for his promise of aid against France a higher status in the Confederation, either the alternation in the presidency, or the command of the North German troops. Instead, he was now offered territory—delectable to be sure—but belonging by right to others. His conscience would not yet allow him so rapidly to change from a liberator to an outright conqueror.¹⁶⁷

At the same time, or early the next morning, Franz Joseph examined the draft agreement but postponed a definite acceptance of the proposals of his minister.¹⁶⁸ His approval of the alliance clause was doubtless offset by the fear that the partition-annexation would permanently alienate the German middle and small states from Austrian leadership. He accepted the advice of Biegeleben, that in the peace treaty the three

¹⁶¹ I assume that the partition stipulations were intended to form part of the alliance treaty, or a coordinate treaty (See Appendix B, No. 14, explanatory note).

¹⁶² Appendix B, Nos. 17 and 20.

¹⁶³ Friedjung I, p. 100 (source not indicated).

¹⁶⁴ Appendix B, No. 20. Cf. No. 17.

¹⁶⁵ Appendix B, No. 17.

¹⁶⁶ Appendix B, Nos. 1 and 12. Cf. Friedrich Frahm: "Die Bismarcksche Lösung der schleswig-holsteinischen Frage," in *Zeitschrift der Gesellschaft für Schleswig-Holsteinische Geschichte* LIX, 1930, pp. 418-419. Frahm seems not to know Engel-Janosi's study of Rechberg, and the evidence of Rechberg's letters.

¹⁶⁷ Appendix B, No. 12.

¹⁶⁸ Appendix B No. 16.

Duchies should be ceded, undivided, to the two powers in common.¹⁶⁹

Seeing their hopes fade into the distance, Bismarck and Rechberg seemingly agreed to prepare their monarchs gradually for the adoption of their dualistic ideals.¹⁷⁰ With a sigh Rechberg added that after all, the King's good will was worth more than treaties.¹⁷¹

To save what little goodwill remained, the two ministers drew up a short declaration of principles,¹⁷² from which all mention of the Duchies was conspicuously absent. Couched in harmless and elastic phrases, it ran somewhat as follows:

In order to exercise the influence upon federal German affairs, to which they have a just claim, the sovereigns of Austria and Prussia desire to cooperate with one another in directing the policy of Germany. To this end, they agree to respect the federal treaties in good faith, so long as they are not broken by others; and also to oppose in common and with emphasis any excesses of a majority of the other states which run contrary to the principles of the Confederation.¹⁷³

This declaration was submitted to the sovereigns at their last meeting and received their hearty approval.¹⁷⁴ Amid warm expressions of friendship and solidarity in conservative interests, William departed on August 25, while Bismarck lingered for business of state and a dinner given in his honor by Rechberg.

At this dinner in the suburban villa of Kettenhof, an episode characteristic of Bismarck was enacted. When the repast was over, he withdrew with the French ambassador, and in a long and entirely private conversation, directed to Napoleon's address, he sought to convince Gramont that Prussia would be the best ally for France. "The one who can give the Rhine

¹⁶⁹ Appendix B, No. 17.

¹⁷⁰ Appendix B, No. 14. Cf. Nos. 2 and 7.

¹⁷¹ Appendix B, No. 12. (Cf. Engel-Janosi: *Krise* p. 194).

¹⁷² Appendix B, No. 19.

¹⁷³ Free rendering of passage in No. 5, Appendix B.

¹⁷⁴ Appendix B, Nos. 17 and 19. Cf. Bismarck's letter of October 4, 1864, to Rechberg: "Wir hatten uns in Schönbrunn die Aufgabe gestellt, gemeinsam die deutsche Politik zu leiten." (*G. W.* IV, p. 567).

provinces to France is the one who possesses them."¹⁷⁵ He reassured the Duke that Prussia was bound by no treaties to Austria, and in the Duchies question, he said, "oceans of ink would still flow."¹⁷⁶ Later on, still at a safe distance from his host, Bismarck regaled a number of German envoys with jests at Austria's claim to be a German state. She would do better, he concluded, not to "chase the phantom of supremacy in Germany, which we dispute with her, and which belongs to her under no title whatever."¹⁷⁷ Having thus repaired his bridges toward France, and exposed his contempt for his erst-while ally, Bismarck followed his King on August 26.¹⁷⁸

* * * * *

What fruit had the Schönbrunn conferences produced? The allied monarchs had renewed their personal friendship. Bismarck's alluring picture of a future comradeship in arms had left more than a passing impression upon Franz Joseph. The sovereigns had cheered each other by casting slurs upon Louis Napoleon, but within five weeks both were courting his attentions. They had chanted their desire to cooperate in directing German affairs, but were soon more sharply at loggerheads than before. In the crucial problem of the Duchies neither had shown a willingness to modify his views to meet those of

¹⁷⁵ Gramont to Drouyn, August 28, 1864 (*Origines* IV, p. 62).

¹⁷⁶ *Origines* IV, p. 65.

¹⁷⁷ Memor p. 148. A similar thought is reflected in Bismarck's marginals on Rechberg's letter of September 17, 1864 (Sybel III, p. 295). It is hard to believe that Bismarck went so far as to say (as Memor p. 148 further reports): "[The German part of Austria] will return inevitably to Germany, sooner or later. It is no more difficult to govern Vienna from Berlin than to govern Pesth from Vienna." Such a picture of a future Great-Germany of 70 millions would terrify rather than appeal to French imaginations, as Bismarck knew well. Keudell (*Fürst und Fürstin Bismarck* p. 170 note 1) and Friedjung (*Kampf* I, p. 97 note) doubt that Bismarck said this, but Kohl reproduces it (*Bismarck-Regesten* I, p. 238 note) and Matter (*Bismarck et son Temps* II, p. 274 note) defends it.

¹⁷⁸ Sybel (III, p. 288) incorrectly states that Bismarck returned directly from Schönbrunn to Berlin. In reality, he went to Munich, Baden-Baden, and Frankfurt, and did not reach Berlin until September 12 (*Bismarck-Regesten* I, p. 239; Heinrich Abeken: *Ein schlichtes Leben in bewegter Zeit*

the other. All serious questions had been postponed in *echt Wiener* fashion. The Schönbrunn meeting, like that at Tep-litz, had begun and ended with nothing but polite phrases and fond hopes.

Both ministers had suffered a disappointing check. They had wanted to eliminate the apple of discord by sharing it half and half. Never had Bismarck come closer to Austria's wishes, nor Rechberg to Prussia's.¹⁷⁹ But the apple was left hanging, a constant challenge, a temptation, and an irritation. Bismarck had failed to win either ruler to his annexation policy. Rechberg saw his own influence dangerously undermined by his powerful subordinate, Biegeleben. The Austrian minister doubtless hoped that if he could maintain his place among the councillors of the Emperor for a few months longer he would be able to revive the one significant idea which had emerged from the Schönbrunn discussions, viz. the partition.¹⁸⁰ Just as the Prussian minister-president was leaving Vienna, Rechberg showed him the precariousness of his own position in the Austrian cabinet. The Schmerlingites would throw him overboard if he did not secure the renewal of Austria's right to discuss a future tariff-union with the *Zollverein*, the condition they had posed in July.¹⁸¹ Bismarck himself must have been skeptical that the partition idea would find acceptance in the *Hofburg*, but he saw some chance of gain for Prussia if Rechberg could be saved.¹⁸² He therefore thought it well at once to prepare the ground in Berlin for this harmless tariff concession demanded by Rechberg.¹⁸³ Meanwhile, since nothing was settled, he kept the wire open to Paris in order to render Austria "more pliable."¹⁸⁴

¹⁷⁹ Cf. Lenz: *Geschichte Bismarcks* p. 255.

¹⁸⁰ Cf. Appendix B, No. 14.

¹⁸¹ *G. W.* IV, p. 545; *Gedanken und Erinnerungen* I, p. 375.

¹⁸² He needed Austria at least until the Danish treaty was signed (*G. W.* IV, p. 571), and kept her dangling by continued hints in the press (Appendix B, Nos. 3 and 7).

¹⁸³ *G. W.* IV, p. 544 ff.

¹⁸⁴ *Origines* IV, p. 118.

The only victor at Schönbrunn was ministerial councillor von Biegeleben.¹⁸⁵ He had fought a hard fight to keep the allies apart, and had won it. He calculated that the independence of the Duchies might be saved, if only he could prevent his sovereign from yielding them to Prussia while under the spell of Bismarck's strong personality.¹⁸⁶ On Biegeleben's advice, the partition was tabled, and the Duchies were to be ceded to both powers together.¹⁸⁷ One may imagine his ironical smile as he accepted the Prussian Order of the Red Eagle, first class.¹⁸⁸ What wonder, too, that the zealous *Referent* began to wish himself in Rechberg's place in the *Haus am Ballhausplatz*!¹⁸⁹

¹⁸⁵ *Ministerialrat* was his official designation (see protocol of minister council, November 23, 1864). He was made *Hofrat* and *Referent* for German Affairs, in 1852, and *Geheimrat* in 1863. (Vivenot's article, "Ludwig Maximilian, Frhr. von Biegeleben," in *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie* II, pp. 620-622. Cf. R. von Biegeleben: *Ludwig Freiherr von Biegeleben* p. 260).

¹⁸⁶ Biegeleben noted Franz Joseph's "disquieting admiration" for Bismarck's firmness (Vogt p. 44 note 2).

¹⁸⁷ Friedjung II, p. 587.

¹⁸⁸ *Allgemeine Zeitung* 1864, No. 252, "Wien 6 September."

¹⁸⁹ Friedjung: *Historische Aufsätze* p. 320; Vivenot, *loc. cit.*, p. 621. Biegeleben was ambitious not for enhanced prestige but for the unhindered power to carry out his ideas.

CHAPTER IV

AUSTRIA AT THE CROSSROADS

DURING the two months which followed the inconclusive Schönbrunn love-feast, the Vienna statesmen and the Austrian public were asking themselves whither the monarchy was headed, and whither she should go. Each had his own interpretation of the foreign constellation, and his own counsel to urge upon the Emperor.

AUSTRIA AND THE POWERS: SEPTEMBER 1864

Whether most Austrians realized it or not, the relations of the monarchy with the powers were improving in September and October 1864. Early in the year, Rechberg had begun again his arduous labor of *rapprochement* with Russia. The declaration of martial law in Galicia, denoting strict measures for Austria's Poles, was much appreciated in St. Petersburg. In early summer, Franz Joseph took pains to greet Alexander at Kissingen,¹ and he urged Bismarck to include the Tsar in the monarchical *fiesta* being planned for September.² But that Russia still wished to make Austria feel her displeasure was evident from her lack of cooperation at the London Conference. Moreover, Austria's championship of Augustenburg, the "democrat," was reckoned against her, with Bismarck's benediction, despite Rechberg's promise to respect the claims of the Tsar's kinsman, the Grand Duke of Oldenburg.³ Though Count Revertera, the ambassador of Austria in St. Petersburg, was under no illusion as to Austria's influence on the Neva,

¹ The two Emperors met on June 16 (Vogt p. 209 and note 2). Rechberg had an interview with Gorchakov and an audience with Alexander. When Rechberg attempted to justify his conduct in the Polish affair, the Tsar cut him off with "Quant à la Pologne, ne m'en parlez pas" (Dalwigk: *Tagebücher* p. 150).

² *G. W.* IV, p. 506.

³ Rechberg to Apponyi and Biegeleben June 9, 1864, No. 1.

yet basically Russia's interest in the smaller German states (the Tsar had family ties also with Stuttgart and Darmstadt) coincided more closely with Vienna's federalism than with Berlin's annexationism, and offered some ground for cooperation during the following months.

The nadir of Austrian relations with Great Britain had come almost a year later than the extreme coldness with Russia. By the beginning of 1864, Palmerston had seemingly become convinced that he possessed considerable influence on the policies of Vienna, when suddenly the Prusso-Austrian invasion of Schleswig had given him a painful surprise.⁴ His anger, and the maladroitness of Apponyi and Biegeleben, had hindered a closer friendship at the London Conference, though he persuaded Austria to keep her fleet out of the Baltic, and thus avoided an actual rupture.⁵ The resumption of the war in June aroused further bitterness throughout the country, and this feeling was tinged with contempt for Austria's spineless subservience to Bismarck.⁶ But since British interests were not directly menaced, the public soon forgot its hostility after the end of the war. An unofficial, but much-noticed visit of Lord Clarendon to Vienna *en route* for Italy,⁷ the Austrian recognition of King George of Greece,⁸ and the opening of negotiations for an Anglo-Austrian commercial treaty revived the latent friendship between the two countries in the autumn of 1864.

Austro-Prussian fraternity had had a more depressing effect in Paris than in London. During the Danish war the relations

⁴ "The conduct of Austria and Prussia is discreditably bad," he wrote to Lord Russell, February 13, 1864 (Ashley: *Life of Lord Palmerston* II, p. 247).

⁵ *Letters of Queen Victoria*, second series, I, p. 181 note 1. The Queen considered Palmerston's language to Apponyi too strong.

⁶ For Palmerston's and Clarendon's opinions, see above chapter II; also Ashley II, p. 247. Palmerston never got over his bitterness against Austria. Cf. Vitzthum von Eckstädt pp. 80-81 (April 1865) and Ashley II, p. 271 (September 1865).

⁷ In late September 1864. For his conversations with Rechberg, see *Origines* IV, p. 248 note 4, and p. 249.

⁸ To Rechberg August 24, 1864, letter.

between the Seine and the Danube were still under the cloud of the unhappy experiences of 1863. To be sure, Napoleon received Metternich as graciously as ever, but he bestowed much more of his favor on Goltz and Bismarck.⁹ At the end of the war his forecast of a quarrel in the German "fair" began to be realized as the differences of opinion between the allies became public.¹⁰ Still clasping each other's hands, Franz Joseph and William were soon casting hesitant but meaningful glances toward the man on the Seine.

There is an element of unconscious comedy in the reactions of the rulers and people of the Germanies to Napoleon's policy of watchful waiting. Not only did they overestimate his acumen and his courage, but they tried to wring petty advantages from each other, and to keep each other in order by saying, in effect, "Remember that if we quarrel Napoleon alone stands to win." It was indeed the general opinion throughout Europe, that if Austria and Prussia locked horns in battle, France would seize the Rhinelands.¹¹ Only Bismarck realized that Napoleon's heart was better than his head,¹² and Bismarck staked his entire policy on that psychological fact. He had confidence in his own ability to outwit the "sphinx on the Seine." He was clever enough to play the conspirator with Napoleon, to accept the role of German Cavour (bestowed on him in Paris) ready to loose the forces of nationalism against Austria, and apparently willing (but for William's opposition!) to pay Napoleon a *quid pro quo*. Admittedly, Bismarck had a natural advantage over Austria in Caesar's favor.¹³ But

⁹ Henry Salomon p 101; Erich Brandenburg: "Bismarck und Napoleon III. 1863-1866" in *Untersuchungen und Aktenstücke* pp 417-418

¹⁰ "Already the alliance is visibly rent" wrote Gramont on July 31, 1864 (*Origines* III, p. 371).

¹¹ Even Moltke believed it (*Militärische Werke* I, p 4).

¹² *Gedanken und Erinnerungen* I, p 177.

¹³ Brandenburg overestimates this favor, however, when he doubts that Napoleon ever intended to take Austria's side (*Untersuchungen* p 469), as may be seen from the overtures in 1861-1863 to Metternich, of which Brandenburg had little knowledge. His statement is correct for 1864-1866.—On Napoleon's friendship for Prussia, B. Simson. *Über die Beziehungen Napoleons III. zu Preussen und Deutschland* (Freiburg 1882).

none the less, he unfolded all his diplomatic arts to make sure of it. He dared to conjure up visions before Napoleon, which he hardly expected to turn into reality:¹⁴ visions evoked by ingenious hints thrown out to General Fleury, Minister Rouher, the Duc de Gramont, and later to Lefebvre de Béhaine and Benedetti.¹⁵ He intended to beat Napoleon at his own game.

The only way Austria could outplay this astute and daring rival was to face the facts in Italy, abandon Venetia, and turn her whole force against Prussia. But even if the *Hofburg* were willing to stoop to such measures, they did not think the danger sufficiently acute. Not only did Rechberg and Franz Joseph overestimate Napoleon, they underestimated Bismarck. These capital errors of judgment, however, were shared with practically every chancellery in Europe, including the *Tuileries* itself!

In renewing the rivalry for the favor of France, Bismarck as usual got the start of Rechberg. In July he had extended to Napoleon an invitation to visit William on the Rhine.¹⁶ Several days later he broadened the plan to include the Tsar Alexander and the Emperor Franz Joseph,¹⁷ who was keen for a meeting à quatre in which Napoleon would be dominated by a safe majority. Two weeks after Bismarck's initiative, Rech-

¹⁴ The generally accepted opinion on this point, based on Bismarck's letter to William, September 20, 1873 (*Anhang zu den Gedanken und Erinnerungen* I, p. 242-244), has been modified since the publication of Bismarck's illuminating *Votum* concerning the Saar mines, April 30, 1866, in which he admits the possible necessity of a small cession of territory under certain very unfavorable circumstances (*G. W.* V, p. 475).

¹⁵ See especially *Origines* I, p. 4; IV, p. 62; VII, pp. 64-65, 91; X, p. 31; and Sir Alexander Malet: *The Overthrow of the Germanic Confederation by Prussia in 1866* p. 112.

¹⁶ *G. W.* IV, p. 503.

¹⁷ *G. W.* IV, p. 506. Bismarck's purpose may be seen in the following unpublished telegram to Goltz: ". . . Rein persönliche unpolitische Begegnung anzuraten, damit wir Mittelpunkt bleiben und keine separate Begegnung neben uns stattfindet. . . . Finden Sie dass Fürst Metternich Ähnliches dort betreibt, so behalten wir Begegnung mit dem König allein im Auge. . . ." (Bismarck to Goltz, Vienna July 30, 1864, tg. No. 20. PGS).

berg also broached the matter to Gramont.¹⁸ In refusing the invitation, Drouyn thanked both powers for their courtesy,¹⁹ but Napoleon knew to whom the greater credit was due.

Bismarck was accumulating further credit in his Paris account by forcing the French commercial treaty upon the *Zollverein* states and refusing Austria's demands for its alteration.²⁰ In August, Rechberg thought it best to open a Paris account himself, and he indicated his intention of beginning negotiations for an Austro-French commercial treaty.²¹ He pleased the French, too, by his moderation in the peace negotiations with the Danes,—he seemed to mediate between them and Prussia.²² The campaign of the Schmerling papers for the recognition of the Kingdom of Italy could not but be gratifying to Napoleon. When Eugénie sought a brief vacation at Schwalbach in Baden, Franz Joseph sent his cousin, the Archduke Stephen, to pay his respects to the Empress of the French.²³

But these Austrian expressions of better feeling paled in comparison with the profuse courtesies of the northern rival. While the King and Queen of Prussia overwhelmed Eugénie with attentions and compliments,²⁴ Bismarck was seeking to make a good impression upon Napoleon's half-brother, the Duke of Morny, who he hoped would return to Paris "charmed

¹⁸ Rechberg merely asked whether and when Napoleon intended to go to the Rhine (Gramont to Drouyn, August 2. *Origines* IV, p. 6).

¹⁹ *Origines* IV, p. 27.

²⁰ Bismarck to Goltz, June 28, 1864 (*G. W.* IV, p. 476).

²¹ Gramont to Drouyn, August 17 (*Origines* IV, p. 40). The Austrian minister council had decided, on August 2, that such negotiations should be opened with Paris, for purely political reasons, in spite of grave commercial disadvantages to Austria (protocol of minister council, HHS).

²² Bloomfield to Russell, letter, October 6, 1864 (F. O. 356 Bloomfield Papers 39).

²³ Gramont to Drouyn, October 12 (*Origines* IV, p. 249 f.; Rechberg to Müllinen, September 21).

²⁴ In fact, their insistence proved embarrassing to Eugénie, for she had announced her desire to be relieved from visits (Carette: *Souvenirs intimes de la cour des Tuileries*, third series pp. 18, 44, 50). William called upon her both at Schwalbach and later at Baden.

with our amiability.”²⁵ A little earlier the Prussian minister of war had been sent to attend the French manoeuvres at Châlons, and distribute further compliments in Paris.²⁶ In October Bismarck himself set out for France.²⁷

Franz Joseph was realist enough to see that under these circumstances a closer *rapprochement* with France was desirable to prevent the Prussian premier from stealing a march on Austria. The opportunity for such a move presented itself in connection with a startling development in Italy.

* * * * *

Napoleon had determined to move one step nearer to a settlement of the Italian question. On September 15 he signed a convention with Italy, by which he agreed to withdraw his troops from Rome within two years, in return for Victor Emanuel's promise not to attack the papal city, and his secret pledge to remove his capital to Florence as visible evidence of the renunciation of Rome.²⁸ In negotiating this agreement without the knowledge of Austria, Napoleon obviously desired to confront Franz Joseph with a disagreeable *fait accompli*. The inevitable result of withdrawing protection from the Pope was to leave him at the mercy of Garibaldi, and the consequence

²⁵ “That will serve me in Kiel and Rendsburg,” Bismarck told a confidant (*Origines* IV, p. 119).

²⁶ Roon: *Denkwürdigkeiten* II, pp. 270-280. Austria sent no representative of such importance to the manoeuvres.

²⁷ Bismarck told Count Chotek that “just before his departure for Baden” he had decided to take his doctor's advice, and spend two weeks or more in a southern seaside resort, Biarritz or Nice. He did not expect to pass through Paris (Chotek to Rechberg, tg. No. 115, October 2, 1864, and despatch No. 80 F, October 3).

²⁸ The efforts made by Napoleon between 1860 and 1864 to evacuate Rome are known chiefly from Thouvenel's *Le Secret de L'Empereur* (Paris 1889) and *Pages de l'histoire de France* (Paris 1903). They are summarized in Bourgeois and Clermont *Rome et Napoleon III* (Paris 1907) pp. 199-217, and more fully considered by Lynn M. Case: *Franco-Italian Relations 1860-1865*.—For the negotiations leading to the September Convention, see Minghetti: *La Convenzione di Settembre* (Bologna 1899); the Pepoli papers in Chiala: *Giacomo Dina e l'opera sua* (Turin 1899), Appendix to volume II; Hubert Bastgen: *Die römische Frage. Dokumente und Stimmen* II, pp. 308-451.

of officially blocking the road to Rome was to turn the hearts of law-abiding Italians more than ever toward Venetia.²⁹ Thus Austrian interests were doubly endangered, and Napoleon gained a measure of revenge for 1863.³⁰

As the news percolated little by little into the open, Austrian fears were aroused to the highest pitch.³¹ Rechberg suspected "all sorts of secret articles"³² and was convinced that the Italians would treat as a scrap of paper their promise not to touch Rome, just as they had trampled all over the treaty of Zurich.³³ At the first news, Rechberg dashed off instructions to the chargé in Paris, inviting him to impress upon Drouyn de Lhuys that "the assent of the Holy Father is for us an indispensable condition for the solution of the Roman question and for every measure touching the position and the interests of the Holy See."³⁴ Public opinion in Vienna called for some sort of guarantee for Venetia.³⁵ Paris expected a formal Austrian protest against the convention,³⁶ and several French

²⁹ La Gorce: *Histoire du Second Empire* IV, p. 536; La Marmora: *Un Po' Più di Luce* p. 36

³⁰ Müllinen (Austrian chargé in Paris) to Rechberg, October 22, 1864, No. 47 K.

³¹ The Austrian chargé had suspected negotiations for some time but knew nothing until September 19 when certain indiscretions were dropped by the *Palais Royal* (Prince Napoleon). He wormed other details from Drouyn, behind whose back the Emperor had largely carried on negotiations. The Italian press revealed the secret of the removal of the capital. On September 28 and 29, Rechberg received most of the details, but was still without knowledge of the text of the treaty.

³² He thought that "Piedmont may be the price that Victor Emanuel will have to pay" for the treaty (Bloomfield to Russell, letter, September 29, 1864. F. O. 356 Bloomfield Papers 39).

³³ Rechberg inquired searchingly of Gramont, what would happen if a rebellion fomented among the papal mercenaries should give Italy the pretext of marching into Rome to restore order. Would France return and drive out the Italians? (*Origines* IV, p. 206 f.). The same question was repeated in more diplomatic form on October 16 (*Origines* IV, p. 263 f.). Sybel (IV, p. 15) reports sharper words between Rechberg and Gramont than the latter reported to his Government.

³⁴ Rechberg to Müllinen, September 21, 1864.

³⁵ Gramont to Drouyn, September 30 (*Origines* IV, p. 208).

³⁶ Drouyn bristled with defensive arguments in preparation for an Austrian onslaught (Grey to Russell, September 29, No. 114 Confidential. F. O. 27 France 1534).

papers broke into diatribes against the Habsburg state.³⁷ "The Convention," wrote the British chargé in Paris, ". . . is here almost universally considered to be a menace to Austria."³⁸

In spite of his anger, Rechberg saw that Austria had nothing to gain by French hostility, and wisely determined to make the best of a bad situation. He took note officially of Drouyn's statement that France was "as solicitous as any Catholic power . . . for the independence of the Sovereign Pontiff,"³⁹ and Napoleon's assurance that if the Italian parliament did not solemnly renounce Rome the convention would be invalidated.⁴⁰ At bottom, he did not believe that Napoleon could afford to permit Rome to be captured.⁴¹ Instead of secretly encouraging the Pope in futile resistance, Rechberg frankly told him that Austria had no intention of sending troops to replace the French.⁴² He began to use a warmer tone to Gramont.⁴³ In a formal note to Paris, Rechberg sought in

³⁷ Even the *Constitutionnel*, a government-inspired journal, spoke of "Italie qui n'avait plus d'étrangers qu'à Venise." (Mülinen to Rechberg, October 3, 1864, No. 37 L).

³⁸ Grey to Russell, September 29, No. 114 Confidential (F. O. 27 France 1534).

³⁹ Drouyn to Gramont, September 26 (*Origines* IV, p. 180 ff.). Drouyn also insisted that the convention in no way changed the legal situation in Italy (i. e. the Zurich basis). The translation of the capital to Florence, not a part of the convention, *did* violate the Zurich treaty however.

⁴⁰ This assurance given in a letter from Napoleon to Eugénie, which the latter while in Germany showed to Metternich (Metternich to Rechberg, tg. Johannsberg, October 2, 1864).

⁴¹ Rechberg to Mülinen, October 12, No. 2 *réserve*; Bloomfield to Russell, letters of September 29 and October 13 (F. O. 356 Bloomfield Papers 39). Rechberg did believe, however, that Napoleon would allow the Italians to reduce the papal territory somewhat further.

⁴² Rechberg to Ottenfels, October 12, Nos. 1, 2, 3 *réserve*; Gramont to Drouyn, October 13 (*Origines* IV, p. 253). Rechberg's sincerity is proved by his words in minister council October 18: "Wir müssen uns daher auch hüten den Papst, durch Zusicherung einer militärischen Unterstützung zum Widerstande aufzumuntern, zumal die Entsendung eines oesterreichischen Corps nach dem Kirchenstaate, sei es allein, sei es mit anderen Potentaten, für uns nur die Quelle der nachtheiligsten, ja für die Monarchie, gefährlichsten Verwicklungen sein würde." (Protocol, HHS).

⁴³ Interview of September 29 (*Origines* IV, p. 218).

the most conciliatory language to dispel the last clouds of misunderstanding.⁴⁴ He reserved judgment on the convention until the complete text should be communicated, accepted gratefully the French assurances, and concluded with a bid for an *entente* on Italian affairs. If the Holy Father should be menaced and appeal for aid, he wrote, "we would gladly show Europe the spectacle of Austria and France intimately united for the defense of Catholic interests." To his colleagues in the minister council, Rechberg explained that

"in dealing with such a dangerous and insidious opponent as France, it was the best policy for Austria to associate herself with that opponent's plausible acts, but otherwise to remain as passive as possible in order to deprive him of any excuse for aggression."⁴⁵

The result of Rechberg's note was gratifying. Drouyn's joy was unbounded, and Napoleon's satisfaction was shown in the better tone of the Paris press.⁴⁶ Rechberg plumed himself on having parried a possible attempt of Napoleon's to set in motion a series of crises which would begin with Rome and Venetia and end with annexations on the Rhine.⁴⁷ The real result was less sensational but no less sound. Austria had made the first significant gesture toward France since the alliance proposal in 1859, and a genuine improvement in relations might be expected.⁴⁸

When the King of Prussia got wind of this Austrian move, he was highly alarmed.⁴⁹ He saw it purely as a stroke of

⁴⁴ Rechberg to Müllinen, October 12 (correctly printed in *Origines* IV, p. 250 ff.). The cordiality of the note astonished the Austrian chargé in Berlin, Count Chotek, who exceeded his instructions by reading it to the undersecretary von Thile (Thile to Goltz, October 22; HAA). Sybel (IV, p. 15) wrongly places this dispatch of Rechberg's in the latter half of October.

⁴⁵ Protocol of minister council, October 18, 1864.

⁴⁶ Müllinen to Rechberg, October 22, No. 47 K, and October 30, tg. No. 82.

⁴⁷ Protocol of minister council, October 18.

⁴⁸ Rechberg even went so far as to advise Franz Joseph to seek a personal meeting with Napoleon (Engel-Janosi: "Die Krise des Jahres 1864 in Oesterreich," in *Historische Studien A. F. Pribram zum 70. Geburtstag Dargebracht*, p. 194. Cited henceforth as Engel-Janosi: *Krise*).

⁴⁹ A copy of Rechberg's note of October 12 to Paris, was sent to the Austrian chargé in Berlin for his own information. But Count Chotek, exceeding

Schmerling's to force Prussia to concessions in the pending commercial negotiations. "Hence," he wrote, "great caution on our part, in order not to be duped! Bismarck had better test the *terrain* in Paris and lay countermines."⁵⁰ How naive was the old King's fear, in the light of Austria's faltering foreign policy, and of Bismarck's constant flirtations with France.⁵¹ At this moment, Bismarck, stopping for an interview with Napoleon at St. Cloud, needed no royal command to seize the opportunity to undercut Austria.⁵²

COMMERCIAL NEGOTIATIONS WITH PRUSSIA

An improvement in relations between Austria and France such as that now contemplated by Rechberg was agreeable to nearly all classes and parties in the Danube monarchy. Thanks partly to Schmerling's press campaign, and partly to a growing realization of Prussia's ulterior motives, the friends of France were increasing in the summer and autumn of

his instructions, read it in confidence to Herr von Thile, director in the foreign office in Bismarck's absence. Thile afterward noted down the contents from memory, somewhat exaggerating Rechberg's bid for a French *rapprochement*, and sent a copy to the King. Another copy was sent to Goltz with instructions to ascertain whether this "rather remarkable" move of Rechberg's was "the first step in a *rapprochement* with the *Tuileries* in the realm of general policy." (Thile to Goltz, October 22, No. 314. PGS).

⁵⁰ William's marginal note on Thile's memorandum, quoted in Thile to Goltz, October 24, No. 318, *ganz vertraulich* (PGS).

⁵¹ Bismarck confessed to a friend that the purpose of his gestures to France at this time was "to make Austria more pliable" and "to cause my friend Rechberg a terrible fright." (*Origines* IV, pp. 118-119). To the Austrian chargé, Bismarck told a different story: Prussia had to have "especially intimate relations with the court of the *Tuileries*" in order to exercise a "conservative tranquillizing influence," of distinct benefit to Austria "because of the financial situation." Chotek did not swallow this excuse (Chotek to Rechberg, October 3, 1864, No. 80E).

⁵² The interview took place on October 25, 1864 (Kohl: *Bismarck-Regesten* I, p. 243). During the interview Bismarck revealed to Napoleon that Austria had asked for a treaty, but that he had rejected it, and that Austro-Prussian relations were therefore not as intimate as they appeared to be. Napoleon's account of the interview is given in Appendix B, No. 9. Another version in Vitzthum p. 55.

1864.⁵³ This strong reaction against the Prussian alliance, this clamor for a reorientation of Austrian foreign policy, extremely annoying to Franz Joseph, was the wave of feeling upon which Schmerling and Biegeleben now attempted to ride into greater power over foreign affairs. The issue was to be the treaty of commerce with Prussia.

Two important milestones on the road that led to the war of 1866 proved to be turning-points in the career of Count Rechberg. Both concerned the phrasing of articles in an Austro-Prussian agreement in a sense unfavorable to Austria. Prussia's rewording of article 5 of the alliance protocol (January, 1864) had given her the whip-hand in the Duchies; Prussia's refusal to renew article 25 of the Austro-Prussian commercial treaty of 1853 was to precipitate Rechberg's resignation, and thereby to give greater freedom to the anti-Prussian element in the cabinet and the foreign office, which helped to pull Franz Joseph into the war.

The controversy over article 25 of the treaty of 1853 was the last phase of the great struggle between Austria and Prussia for the commercial hegemony of Germany.⁵⁴ In 1862, as

⁵³ Only a small group of conservatives whose organ was the *Vaterland* clung devotedly to the Prussian alliance (Otto Bandmann: *Die deutsche Presse und die Entwicklung der deutschen Frage 1864-1866* p. 42).

⁵⁴ For Austria's attempts to wrest the leadership of the *Zollverein* from Prussia, see the brief accounts in Stern VIII, pp. 484-487; Sybel III, pp. 284-285; Ziekursch I, pp. 122-123; Ludwig Lang: *Hundert Jahre Zollpolitik* (Vienna 1906) pp. 182-205.—The Austrian case is presented by Adolf Beer: *Die oesterreichische Handelspolitik im 19ten Jahrhundert* pp. 206-310; in the monograph, "Der Vertrag vom 11. April 1865," by Freiherr von Hock, the Austrian negotiator, in the *Oesterreichische Revue*, 1867, Heft I, pp. 1-37; and in the scholarly study by Eugen Franz: "Graf Rechbergs deutsche Zollpolitik," in *Mitteilungen des österreichischen Instituts für Geschichtsforschung* XLVI, 1932, Heft 2, pp. 143-187. Beer, Hock, and Franz have used unpublished Austrian documents. Since Franz has also used the Prussian, French, Bavarian, Würtemberg, and Hessian archives, his study has the broadest foundation of any, for this period.

The Prussian case is best presented by Alfred Zimmermann: *Die Handelspolitik des deutschen Reiches* pp. 35-59; and by the Prussian expert, Rudolph von Delbrück: *Lebenserinnerungen, 1817 bis 1867* (Leipzig 1905) II, pp. 198-349. Both accounts are based on the Prussian archives. See also the careful study of the purely commercial aspects, by Karl Mamroth: *Die Entwicklung*

we have seen, Austria had courageously offered to open up her vast territory to the trade and industry of the *Zollverein*, by eliminating the tariff-wall on the north, i.e., by a so-called "tariff-union" with the German states. The Great-Germanists saw a political advantage for Austria in wresting the economic leadership from Prussia, cost what it might in loss of revenue.⁵⁵ Equally from political motives, Prussia had concluded a most-favored-nation treaty with free-trade France, and offered great possibilities to the *Zollverein* in French markets.⁵⁶ The German states were thus confronted with the alternative of choosing between Austria and this Prusso-French combination.

Under the leadership of industrial Saxony, the *Mittelstaaten* took the same stand that Rechberg had encountered after the *Fürstentag*: they refused to join an Austrian tariff-union, of which Prussia declined to be a member. They were confirmed in this attitude by Prussia's tenacity and Austria's wavering. Count Rechberg lost interest in the commercial struggle when the Danish war brought Austro-Prussian comradeship in arms. And the influence of the Austrian manufacturers also made itself felt against the proposed tariff-union.⁵⁷

Under these circumstances Austria gave up the fight, and

der Oesterreichisch-Deutschen Handelsbeziehungen (1849-1865), (Berlin 1887) pp. 132-172; and the able work of Walther Lotz: "Die Ideen der deutschen Handelspolitik von 1860 bis 1891," in *Schriften des Vereins für Sozialpolitik*, volume L (Leipzig 1892) pp. 64-72.—Many Prussian documents are available in G. W. IV, and H. von Poschinger: *Aktenstücke zur Wirtschaftspolitik des Fürsten Bismarck*, volume I. Bismarck's own share in the negotiation of the commercial treaty is evaluated in O. Schneider's Berlin dissertation (1910): *Bismarck und die preussisch-deutsche Freihandelspolitik, 1862-1876*.

"Austria's industries, which on the whole were far behind those of Prussia, Saxony, and Bavaria, would suffer if forced to compete on equal footing with those of the *Zollverein*, or of France. Banking on this fact, the Prussian statesmen had not foreseen Austria's move, but had turned to France and freer trade with the definite object of stealing a march on Austria, both in relation to France and to the *Zollverein* (Zimmermann p. 27, Beer pp. 215, 217).

⁵⁵ Zimmermann p. 27.

⁵⁷ Zimmermann p. 52.

made no further effort to hold back the smaller states from accepting the Prusso-French treaty and the renewal of the *Zollverein* on that basis. But to save her face and retain the shadow of a more favored commercial relationship with Germany, Austria refused to give up the right to negotiate a tariff-union with the *Zollverein* at some future time. It was this right which had been granted in article 25 of the treaty of 1853, and it has been well said that in this one article the commercial rivalry of the two German powers was embodied.⁵⁸ Franz Joseph's subjects had the uneasy feeling that if the economic door of Germany were barred against them, the political door would not long remain open.

At Schönbrunn, Rechberg had confided to Bismarck that his position in the cabinet would be endangered if Prussia should refuse to let Austria retain this right in the new commercial treaty replacing that of 1853 which was soon to lapse.⁵⁹ Bismarck promised to do what he could in Berlin against the opposition of Geheimrat von Delbrück, the soul of Prussia's commercial policy, and a political opponent of the minister-president.⁶⁰ Returning to Berlin, he secured, not the desired renewal of article 25, but merely the reopening of negotiations.⁶¹ On September 15, Baron Hock of the Austrian finance ministry⁶² began discussions with the Prussian negotiator in Prague. And Baron Kalchberg, head of the ministry of commerce, was packed off to Munich to find out

⁵⁸ Delbrück II, p. 324.

⁵⁹ *G. W.* IV, pp. 544 ff.

⁶⁰ Bismarck to Roon, October 16, 1864 (Roon: *Denkwürdigkeiten* II, p. 289). Delbrück was a liberal, and eager to drive Austria from Germany. Cf. his later confession (*Neue Freie Presse*, July 27, 1906, No. 15060. Article signed S[iegmond] M[ün]z). Delbrück threatened to resign if article 25 were renewed (Delbrück p. 324; *Oesterreichische Rundschau*, XLIII, 1915, Heft 5, p. 209).

⁶¹ Bismarck does not seem to have exerted himself to obtain article 25, in spite of his affirmation in letter of September 29 to Rechberg. See Bismarck's tg. to William, October 18 (*G. W.* IV, p. 574, No. 487 and editor's note).

⁶² Baron Hock and his chief, von Plener, were the protagonists of freer trade for Austria, in opposition to the protectionists of the commerce ministry, Baron Kalchberg and Ministerialrat von Blumfeld (Beer p. 301).

whether the attitude of the *Mittelstaaten* would incline toward a political and economic *rapprochement* with the Monarchy.⁶³ Rechberg was hopeful.

Meanwhile the counsellors in the *Ballplatz* had not been idle. Baron Max von Gagern was a Hessian by birth, like his intimate friends and associates, Biegeleben and Meysenbug.⁶⁴ He commanded a strategic position as Rechberg's *Referent* for commercial matters and his agent for publicity.⁶⁵ Without Rechberg's knowledge, the sharp Austrian note of July 28 was published in the *Allgemeine Zeitung*,⁶⁶ and any chance of retreating with honor from the demand for article 25 was henceforth doomed.⁶⁷

A second incident might have shown Rechberg how little he could bank on Bismarck's aid. He had, at the request of Bavaria and Würtemberg, begged Berlin for a short postponement of the time-limit before which those reluctant states, the last to hold out, had to accept the French treaty or retire from the *Zollverein*. In Bismarck's absence from the capital, the Delbrück influence prevailed, and William refused the extension of time.⁶⁸ Naturally this failure did not increase

⁶³ Josef Freiherr von Kalchberg: *Mein politisches Glaubensbekenntnis in Gedenkblätter aus einer achtzigjährigen Pilgerfahrt* (Leipzig 1881) p. 352.

⁶⁴ Freiherr Max von Gagern was born in Nassau. He became a convert to Catholicism. His biography by Ludwig von Pastor, and the sketch by Gustav von Pacher in the *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie* LV, pp. 479-483, are valuable for his career and character. They contain no information upon these events, however.

⁶⁵ Bandmann p. 3, note 2; and information given to the author by the director of the HHS. For the relations of the foreign ministry with the press in general, see H. Wuttke: *Die deutschen Zeitschriften und die Entstehung der öffentlichen Meinung* (third edition, Leipzig 1875) p. 159.

⁶⁶ Bismarck complained of the indiscretion on September 1 (G. W. IV, p. 548). Rechberg replied that he had already taken steps to prevent a repetition of the outrage (letter to Bismarck September 6: *Oesterreichische Rundschau* XLIII, 1915, p. 115).

⁶⁷ Strictly, the note of July 28 demanded, not article 25 specifically, but "das Ziel einer künftigen Zolleinigung . . . auch über die nächste Zollvereinsperiode hinaus vertragsmässig [festgestellt]" (*Staatsarchiv* IX, p. 263). On this technical difference Delbrück based one of his arguments.

⁶⁸ Bismarck was in attendance on his sick wife, but tried to aid Rechberg by letter (Bismarck to Balan, September 19: *Bismarck-Jahrbuch* VI, p. 76 f.).

the prestige of Rechberg nor the popularity of Prussia in Vienna.

The results of Baron Kalchberg's reconnoitering in Munich were, as might have been expected, disappointing. The German states still rejected the *Mainlinie* idea, were opposed to confessional influences, and held tenaciously to the ideal of a united Germany excluding Magyars and other non-German peoples. In short, the South German statesmen gave Kalchberg plainly to understand that, if they must choose between Prussia and Austria, they would prefer to go with the former.⁶⁹

Baron Hock's reports from Prague, which had at first indicated a willingness on Prussia's part to meet Austria's wishes, suddenly became less favorable.⁷⁰ The Austrian representative was about to break off and return to Vienna. In this predicament, Rechberg appealed once more to Bismarck in an insistent letter,⁷¹ which reached the Prussian minister just as he was leaving Berlin to join the King at Baden-Baden.⁷² Had the appeal arrived twenty-four hours earlier, Bismarck might have won Delbrück over to a satisfactory compromise, and Rechberg would have been saved. As it was, Bismarck's reply rehearsed his futile efforts and tried to argue away the importance of article 25.⁷³ Instead of bread, he gave Rechberg a stone.

In other respects also, Bismarck's letters did not provide pleasant reading: they brought clearly to light the vast difference between the political aims and principles of the two statesmen. Rechberg pleaded for the "strict observance of the federal constitution and the existence and independence of the confederated states," and condemned the policy of

⁶⁹ Kalchberg p. 353.

⁷⁰ For these negotiations, see Hock, *loc. cit.* pp. 15-17; Delbrück II, pp. 318-319.

⁷¹ September 29, 1864. The letter is summarized in Bismarck to Philipsborn, October 3 (*G. W.* IV, p. 564 f.), whence Sybel III, p. 297.

⁷² *G. W.* IV, p. 564.

⁷³ *G. W.* IV, p. 565 ff.

"bullying the Diet and wringing petty victories" from it.⁷⁴

Bismarck retorted in the friendliest tone, "We would be surer of progress along our common path, if we were both to take our stand on the practical ground of cabinet policy, without befogging the situation with the sentimental doctrines of German politicians."⁷⁵

In other words, as Rechberg sorrowfully wrote to Franz Joseph "to hold to the treaty-basis is a nebulous and sentimental policy! . . . Such language is worthy of a Cavour."⁷⁶

The Austrian minister of foreign affairs was in the depths of despair. The peaceful cooperation with Prussia for which he had striven for five years seemed to fall like a house of cards. At this moment, too, Napoleon's September convention with Italy was raising a world of unpleasant prospects for him. Worn down by the constant grind of the Danish war and the peace negotiations, over which he presided in person,—without a vacation for a year,—Rechberg's nerves were in no condition to stand the strain. Bitterly disillusioned about Bismarck, the Count wrote to his sovereign, "The task of holding this man within bounds and bringing him down from his militaristic expansion policy . . . is beyond human endurance."⁷⁷ He accused Bismarck of breaking his promise in the matter of article 25, and proposed to the Kaiser to break off negotiations entirely rather than to retreat from the position of the treaty of 1853.⁷⁸ His words might have been written by Biegeleben himself!

⁷⁴ Rechberg to Bismarck, September 17 (*Oesterreichische Rundschau* XLIII, p. 205 f.)

⁷⁵ Bismarck to Rechberg, September 29 (*G. W.* IV, p. 562; *Oesterreichische Rundschau* XLIII, p. 208).

⁷⁶ Rechberg's *Vortrag*, c. October 3, 1864 (*Engel-Janosi: Graf Rechberg* p. 141).

⁷⁷ "The task of . . . bringing him . . . into the only path which can give us security against Prussia's leaving Your Majesty in the lurch again at the crucial moment or attaching to his fidelity conditions that cannot be granted, is beyond human endurance." (Rechberg's *Vortrag*, c. October 3, 1864: *Engel-Janosi*, pp. 141-142)

⁷⁸ *Engel-Janosi* p. 142 Rechberg here adopted the advice of Baron Hock, apparently regardless of the fact that it would give Schmerling the opening for which he was eager. Possibly Rechberg desired to test the Emperor's loyalty to him and to the Prussian alliance

But Franz Joseph showed no sign of wavering. Away in the mountains for a fortnight's hunting with his cousin, Prince Albert of Saxony,⁷⁹ the Emperor proved himself more faithful to the Prussian alliance than his disheartened minister. To Rechberg's complaints of Bismarck's conduct, he wrote the reply:

"Unfortunately very true, but the alliance with Prussia is still the only right one under the existing circumstances, and therefore the thankless attempts to keep Prussia in the right track and on the ground of the treaties must be persisted in."⁸⁰

Thus spurred on to his Sisiphus-labor, Rechberg entered the minister-council on October 7 determined to resist the very policy he had advocated a few days before.⁸¹ He proposed that a new parley be opened with Prussia, and that Bavaria and Saxony be invited to assist, in order to strengthen Austria's position. This idea was well received by the ministers of finance and commerce, but was attacked by the others present, including Baron Hock and Baron Biegeleben, who had been asked to attend the meeting.⁸² Baron Hock proposed that Prussia should fulfil five preliminary conditions. If she refused, Austria should turn to France for a commercial treaty. Biegeleben fell in with this, and wanted "a sort of ultimatum" sent at once to Berlin, a plan which appealed to Schmerling, who feared that otherwise Prussia would spin out long negotiations and make Austria the "dupe." A warm discussion then surged around the opposing suggestions. "Let the matter be brought to a decision," shouted Hock, "a Prussian 'no' is better for us than future negotiations, which make us ridiculous. . . ." Count Rechberg could hardly contain himself, and retorted hotly that

⁷⁹ Hassel: *Aus dem Leben Königs Albert von Sachsen II*, p. 196.

⁸⁰ Marginal on Rechberg's *Vortrag* of October 3 (?) (Engel-Janosi: *Rechberg* p. 142 note 3).

⁸¹ The following from the protocol in HHS (printed in Engel-Janosi: *Krise* pp. 181-186).

⁸² Presumably with Rechberg's knowledge and consent.

the present moment was the very most unfavorable to press Prussia with an ultimatum, for Bismarck was away from Berlin. "You speak of waste of time, of speeding up the matter," he cried, "but with all possible speed the French negotiations could not be started before the opening of the *Reichsrat*. Far worse than loss of time would be the complete breakdown of the negotiations, which if handled carefully may still be brought to an acceptable conclusion."

For these reasons, he protested in the strongest terms against the categorical declaration proposed by Biegeleben, and positively refused to take the responsibility for such an act.⁸³ Thus Rechberg threw down the gauntlet to his opponents.

The council came to no formal decision, but the issue was clearly drawn. Seeing himself at odds with the rest of his colleagues, Rechberg resolved to press the Emperor to allow him to resign if Prussia proved unyielding.

Schmerling was quick to take advantage of the situation. The newspapers began to hint at the impending resignation of Count Rechberg,⁸⁴ and his policy of friendship with Prussia was scathingly attacked.⁸⁵ Even some of the officially subventioned papers advocated a *rapprochement* with France and England, and the recognition of Italy.⁸⁶ Loudest of all, it was universally demanded that Austria must not allow herself to be bowed out of Germany by accepting less than article 25. Hardly a voice was raised to defend the foreign minister.

⁸³ Protocol of council, October 7, 1864 (Engel-Janosi: *Krise* pp. 181-186).

⁸⁴ Reuter tg. dated "Vienna October 12" in London *Times*, October 13, 1864 (Cf. Memor p. 161). The Vienna papers began on October 7 to talk of a cabinet crisis (Engel-Janosi: *Krise* p. 161).

⁸⁵ Werther to Thile, October 22 tg. No. 558a (AGEV). The affiliated South German press joined the chorus against Rechberg (Arnim to Bismarck, letter, October 30, 1864, *Geheim*: HAA).

⁸⁶ Bismarck to William, tg. and report, October 16 (*G. W.* IV, pp. 571-573). Franz Joseph complained in council "that the outcries of the Austrian press have recently increased tremendously, and exceed all bounds" (protocol, September 22). On October 31, he said: "Things have come to such a pass that a subventioned paper like the *Botschafter* published a series of editorials containing the sharpest criticism of Austria's foreign policy" (a rebuke to Schmerling). He charged the ministers who dealt with the press to better this "regrettable condition" once for all (protocol of minister-council, October 31: Appendix A, No. 3).

But they reckoned without the Emperor. Franz Joseph refused to sanction Biegeleben's ultimatum policy.⁸⁷ And so important a Schmerlingite as the finance minister seemingly desired the *Zollverein* treaty more than the fall of the foreign minister. Rechberg therefore won his case for further negotiations with Prussia. By agreement between him and Plener, Baron Hock drafted a most friendly note, which welcomed the renewal of negotiations with Prussia but politely maintained Austria's stand on article 25.⁸⁸ The sending of this note was postponed so that its path might be smoothed by another personal appeal to Bismarck.⁸⁹

Rechberg at once set the wheels in motion both through Baron Werther in Vienna and Count Chotek in Berlin.⁹⁰ To the Prussian envoy he described the critical situation with pardonable exaggeration,⁹¹ and requested a quick decision on article 25. If unfavorable, he must resign.⁹² Two days later he repeated to Werther his intention to leave his post if the concession were not granted.⁹³ As a result, Bismarck was soon bombarding the King with telegrams and dispatches from Biarritz,⁹⁴ urging the folly of letting Schmerling win the upper hand when an empty concession — a mere phrase — would

⁸⁷ Engel-Janosi: *Krise* p. 152.

⁸⁸ Draft of note signed "Hock 9/x v. Plener 10/x" (HHS: P. A. III, 86).

⁸⁹ Pencil note by Rechberg, October 10 (*Ibid.* HHS).

⁹⁰ To Chotek he said nothing about resigning (Rechberg to Chotek, October 8, 1864, tg.).

⁹¹ He said that the council had voted to break off negotiations with Prussia, but that he could reverse the decision if article 25 were granted.

⁹² Werther to Abeken, October 8 tg. (*G. W.* IV, p. 568, introduction to No. 482).

⁹³ Werther to Abeken, October 11, tg. No. 535 (AGEV). William had sent the message that he would consider Rechberg's resignation as a great misfortune, and hoped Franz Joseph would not thus endanger the good understanding (Abeken to Werther, October 9 tg.—AGEV). Rechberg was unmoved by the appeal.

⁹⁴ Karolyi wrote from Biarritz: "Bismarck . . . bedauerte sehr die letzten in der Handelsfrage aufgetauchten Schwierigkeiten, und wirkte durch den Telegraphen dahin, dass der Inhalt des Art: 25 . . . in irgend einer Form in den Vertrag aufgenommen werde." (Letter to Rechberg, October 15, 1864).

keep Rechberg in power.⁹⁵ Undersecretary von Thile in Berlin mustered what forces he could to outvote the Delbrück faction.⁹⁶ But the King, still taking his *Kur* in Baden, refused to be stampeded. Werther had wired that he did not think Franz Joseph would accept Rechberg's resignation, if tendered.⁹⁷ Consequently William postponed his decision until Bismarck's return to Berlin,⁹⁸ and stuck to his guns when Rechberg sent a final appeal for haste.⁹⁹ The Count was informed that he could expect no aid from Berlin until the end of October.¹⁰⁰

RECHBERG'S FALL

Meanwhile, with the *Reichsrat* opening less than a month away, Schmerling was becoming desperate, and determined to force a decision. Biegeleben composed an annihilating critique of the Rechberg-Prussian policy in his most convincing style and submitted it through Rechberg to the Emperor, who had returned to his capital.¹⁰¹ In its definite advocacy of an alliance with France, this memorandum embodied the platform on which the Schmerling party bid for the ministry of foreign affairs. Possibly its author considered it a manifesto for his own candidacy,¹⁰² possibly the Schmerling faction had in mind Count Beust¹⁰³ or someone else sympathetic

⁹⁵ Bismarck's dispatches, in *G. W.* IV, pp. 568-575.

⁹⁶ Thile to Bismarck, October 17 (*G. W.* IV p. 574, introduction to No. 488).

⁹⁷ Werther to Abeken, October 11 tg. No. 535 (AGEV).

⁹⁸ *G. W.* IV, p. 571, introduction to No. 484.

⁹⁹ Through Chotek on October 20 (*G. W.* IV, p. 575, introduction to No. 489). Archduke Leopold visited William in Berlin and made an earnest appeal for harmony (Thile to Roon, October 20; Roon, *Denkwürdigkeiten* II, p. 291).

¹⁰⁰ Chotek to Rechberg, October 20, tg. No. 121.

¹⁰¹ This highly important document, unknown to Friedjung, was found by Engel-Janosi in the Rechberg archives and summarized in his work on Rechberg, pp. 125-127.

¹⁰² There is a hint of this desire in a later letter (Vivenot's article on Biegeleben in *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie* II pp. 621-622. Cf. Friedjung: *Historische Aufsätze* p. 320).

¹⁰³ Friedjung: *Kampf* II, p. 588 (from Rechberg). Beust tried to bring about a Franco-Austrian alliance (Vitzthum p. 52 ff.; *Origines* IV, p. 282).

with such ideas. At any rate, Franz Joseph at once turned it over to Rechberg for criticism.¹⁰⁴

Two days before, on October 18, the foreign minister had handed in his resignation.¹⁰⁵ Recognizing the united opposition of his associates,¹⁰⁶ nettled by the attacks from Schmerling's press,¹⁰⁷ and unable to secure the concession on article 25 from Prussia at once, the weary Count preferred to leave office before the *Reichsrat* should meet.¹⁰⁸ At the same time, or shortly after, Schmerling also presented his resignation.¹⁰⁹

Franz Joseph had already made his choice. Rechberg's policy was his own, but Schmerling was indispensable for the *Reichsrat*. He therefore accepted Rechberg's resignation in most gracious terms, requesting him to remain in office until the Danish peace negotiations were concluded.¹¹⁰ At the same time Franz Joseph was looking for a successor who would carry on Rechberg's policies. He wanted no partisan of the French alliance, like Biegeleben or Metternich or Beust. The time was not yet ripe for a federalist like Belcredi,¹¹¹ and Alexander Bach would have caused a revolution.¹¹² In fact,

¹⁰⁴ Engel-Janosi p. 128. Rechberg's reply is discussed below.

¹⁰⁵ Engel-Janosi: *Krise* p. 165, correcting his former assertions (Cf. Engel-Janosi: *Rechberg* pp. 129-130) and the well-known account of Friedjung I, p. 102 and II, p. 588, and other stories based on the somewhat confused reminiscences of Rechberg in the 1890's.

¹⁰⁶ Schmerling seems to have called his associates together, and decided to summon Rechberg to resign (date uncertain). Baron Bürger was charged with the task of informing the foreign minister (Engel-Janosi: *Krise* p. 178).

¹⁰⁷ Engel-Janosi: *Krise* p. 164.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.* p. 165.

¹⁰⁹ Stern IX, p. 391, from Steiger's reports; Sybel III, p. 304, from Werther's reports.

¹¹⁰ Engel-Janosi: *Rechberg* p. 152. Rechberg best described his relations with Franz Joseph in a letter to Manteuffel ("Zwei ungedruckte Briefe über die Entlassung des Grafen Rechberg im Jahre 1864," in *Neue Freie Presse*, July 27, 1906).

¹¹¹ Belcredi was already Esterhazy's candidate for Schmerling's place (Friedjung II, p. 585).

¹¹² Minister of the interior, 1849 to 1859. Werther thought Bach a possible candidate (Werther to Bismarck, October 26, tg. No. 564 *Geheim*. AGEV)

Franz Joseph's preferences and prejudices narrowed the field of choice to a member of the conservative nobility, of whom Schwarzenberg had once remarked that not four possessed sufficient capacity to justify a House of Lords.¹¹³ The Emperor asked Rechberg whether he could recommend Esterhazy for his place.¹¹⁴ But the Count replied that Esterhazy did not possess sufficient initiative, and suggested Count Mensdorff-Pouilly, whom Radetzky had once highly praised.¹¹⁵ For the *Statthalter* of Galicia, who happened to be in the capital at this time, there spoke his relationship with the royal families of England and Belgium¹¹⁶ and a brief ambassadorship in St. Petersburg years before.¹¹⁷ But the deciding factors were undoubtedly his high birth and military rank, his moderately conservative ideals, and above all his dutiful devotion to the dynasty.¹¹⁸ The dictum that the appointment of

and Lord Bloomfield reported a similar rumor, caused by Bach's sponsoring a new plan for a reconciliation with Hungary (Bloomfield to Russell, letter of October 6. F. O. 356 Bloomfield Papers 39). For the numerous candidates printed in the newspapers, see Engel-Janosi: *Krise* p. 161 note.

¹¹³ Redlich: *Francis Joseph of Austria* p. 39.

¹¹⁴ Friedjung II, p. 588.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.* Cf. *Origines* IV, p. 346. In 1861, Rechberg had suggested Mensdorff for president of the minister-council (Engel-Janosi: *Krise* p. 172).

¹¹⁶ Through his mother, Princess Sophie of Coburg, Count Mensdorff was first cousin of Albert, Prince Consort of England; nephew of Leopold I of Belgium; and first cousin of Leopold II and of Ernst II, Duke of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha.

¹¹⁷ Friedjung's excellent brief interpretation of Mensdorff's career and character stands alone (*Kampf* I, pp. 108-110). Additional details in Sybel IV, pp. 19-20; Ludwig von Przibram: *Erinnerungen eines alten Oesterreichers* I pp. 132-134; Richard von Friesen: *Erinnerungen aus meinem Leben* II, p. 106. —For the bare facts of Mensdorff's career, see Wurzbach: *Biographisches Lexikon des Kaiserthums Oesterreich* XVII, pp. 360-363. The somewhat hostile interpretation of Mensdorff's political activity by Sommaruga in the *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie* XXI, pp. 365-366, is based chiefly on contemporary newspapers.—Mensdorff's own defense of his ministerial acts is found in his two memoranda for Franz Joseph, September and October 1866, published by Eduard von Wertheimer in the *Preussische Jahrbücher* CLXXX, 1920, Heft 3, pp. 334-343.

¹¹⁸ Mensdorff was Lieutenant Field Marshal of Cavalry. Franz Joseph wrote to his mother at this time that Mensdorff "possessed more calmness and a more impressive appearance than his predecessor." (*Briefe Kaiser Franz Josephs I. an seine Mutter* p. 342).

a minister in Austria was determined, not by his capacity for the position, but by the political exigencies of the moment,¹¹⁹ might have been coined for the present occasion. Only the express command of the Emperor induced the reluctant Count to undertake a position for which he considered himself entirely unfitted, and which he had repeatedly refused.¹²⁰

On October 27, Rechberg performed his last official act, the signature of the treaty with Denmark. As a signal token of his monarch's favor, he was presented with the coveted Order of the Golden Fleece,¹²¹ an honor which afforded ample consolation for the loss of an office, of whose burdens he had long been weary.¹²²

If Rechberg's fall was a victory for the *Staatsminister* and Biegeleben, the appointment of Mensdorff was a defeat. To be sure, Schmerling seems to have favored the nomination, for Mensdorff was a conciliator and liked by all.¹²³ He belonged neither to the ultra-conservatives nor to the ultramontanes.¹²⁴ But Schmerling was unaware that Mensdorff had the greatest dislike for entering the pseudo-liberal Schmerling

¹¹⁹ Count Belcredi's *mot* ("Fragmente aus dem Nachlass des ehemaligen Staatsministers Richard Graf Belcredi," in *Die Kultur*, 1906, pp. 3-24).

¹²⁰ Vitzthum p. 90; Herr von Thile to King William, Berlin, October 27, 1864 (HAA); Rogge: *Oesterreich von Vilagos* II, p. 254; Engel-Janosi: *Krise* pp. 171-172.

¹²¹ *Origines* IV, p. 328; Memor pp. 161-162.

¹²² "Ich habe wiederholt gebeten, mir die Last des Porte-feuille zu nehmen," wrote Rechberg in 1863, exasperated by Schmerling's attacks (Memorandum for Archduke Rainer: *Nachlass Rechberg*, HHS).

¹²³ Fröbel (II, p. 333) states that Mensdorff had long been Schmerling's candidate for the post. Rogge (II, p. 254) says that Schmerling only learned of Mensdorff's appointment through the *Wiener Zeitung*. Redlich (*Das Oesterreichische Staats- und Reichsproblem* II, p. 336) seems to have followed Rogge, though Fröbel was better informed. (Incidentally Redlich gives the wrong date for Rechberg's fall. *Ibid.*). Friedjung (I, p. 107) supports the views of Fröbel; and the Schmerling papers called Mensdorff's appointment a victory for the *Staatsminister*! (Engel-Janosi: *Krise* p. 163).

¹²⁴ Fröbel (II, p. 337 f.) classed him half-way between the "military absolutists" (who were Prusso-Russophile) and the "liberal military party." See also Rogge II, p. 254.

cabinet.¹²⁵ He had done so presumably with the intention of helping to oust the *Staatsminister* at the first opportunity.¹²⁶

Keen was the disappointment of Biegeleben and the other anti-Prussian counsellors of the foreign office, who now feared for their positions.¹²⁷ In truth, Rechberg did advise curtailment of the influence of Biegeleben and Gagern.¹²⁸ For fourteen years, the former had played an important role in moulding Austria's external policy, and he had hoped at last to direct foreign affairs "at the top." It was not the honor that he coveted, but the power to carry out his ideals. Had he been more of a sycophant and less honest, had he counselled a sterile pro-Prussian policy instead of a French alliance, he might possibly have succeeded Rechberg. As it was, the only light in his dark sky was shed by the hope that the inexperience and pliability of the new minister would force him to lean upon his counsellors and follow their guidance more constantly than his predecessor had done.

* * * * *

While Schmerling and Biegeleben thought they had pulled the strings which led to Rechberg's fall, in reality it was another personality who had given the *coup de grâce*, and who within a few months was to seal the fate of the *Staatsminister* himself. One man more than any other, in the opinion of contemporaries and in the judgment of eminent historians, influenced the decisions of the Emperor from 1864 through the war of 1866,—these years in which Austria was heading at the same time toward the fatal conflict with Prus-

¹²⁵ Thile to William, October 27 (HAA). Cf. Mensdorff's memorandum of October 26, 1866 (*Preussische Jahrbücher* CLXXX, 1920, Heft 3, p. 338). Engel-Janosi: *Krise* p. 171, is non-committal on this point.

¹²⁶ Cf. Countess Mensdorff's remark to Goltz, that the "Schmerlingische System habe vollständig Bankrott gemacht." (Goltz to Bismarck, letter of November 1, 1864: *Bismarck-Jahrbuch* V, p. 246).

¹²⁷ Fröbel II, p. 333 f.

¹²⁸ Friedjung II, p. 589 (from Rechberg); Rechberg to Mensdorff, letter of October 31, 1864 (HHS: *Nachlass Rechberg*). Mensdorff acted on this advice in December.

sia, and toward the fateful compromise with Hungary: Count Moriz Esterhazy, the "man of destiny" for the Habsburg empire.¹²⁹ Since a thorough investigation of the unpublished documents now discloses other powerful influences around the Emperor and throws into greater relief Franz Joseph's own independence and responsibility, this too severe judgment of history should be tempered to a considerable degree. Nevertheless it is evident that Count Esterhazy was among the half-dozen most intimate counsellors of his sovereign during those two years,—perhaps the most continuous, if not always the strongest, single influence both in foreign affairs and in the reorganization of the Austrian monarchy. As few of his letters are accessible, and many are said to have been destroyed, he is and may always remain a somewhat mysterious character.¹³⁰

Called to the cabinet by Schmerling in 1861, Esterhazy was minister without portfolio,—a sort of minister-at-large,—a position whose lack of definite duties suited his temperament, and whose elasticity gave scope to his fairly wide interests, culture, and capacity for analysis. If special interests he had, they were a *penchant* for diplomacy of the Metternich school, and a desire to bring Austria and his native Hungary together. Conservative in politics, ultramontane in religion,

¹²⁹ Joseph Redlich. *Das oesterreichische Staats- und Reichsproblem* II pp. 362-363; a somewhat milder judgment on p. 775; Heinrich Friedjung: *Der Kampf um die Vorherrschaft in Deutschland* I, pp. 231, 236 (tenth edition).

¹³⁰ His personal characteristics may however be gleaned from contemporaries: Belcredi, in *Die Kultur*, 1906, pp. 12-13; Beust II, p. 15; Rechberg, in Friedjung II, pp. 585-586, and in Engel-Janosi: *Krise* pp. 179-180 (exaggerated); Bernhard von Meyer. *Erlebnisse* II, pp. 50-51 (too glowing); Vitzthum p. 90; Fröbel II, p. 362; Przibram I, p. 133. There are character sketches in Friedjung I, pp. 128-131 (much the best); Sybel IV, pp. 117, 424; Redlich: *Francis Joseph* p. 309. Esterhazy's political outlook and aims may be glimpsed in the few letters we have (Appendix A, No. 12; others imperfectly transcribed and printed in Redlich: *Reichsproblem* II, pp. 773-775), and in the protocols of the minister-council, many of which are printed by Redlich: *Reichsproblem* II, here and there. For his attitude toward the Hungarian demands, see Redlich II, pp. 364-365. For his policy toward Prussia, see Appendix A, No. 6. There are also significant hints in Vogt pp. 92-93; Friesen II, p. 107.

critical rather than constructive, now winning, now gloomy, tinged with insanity, the diminutive Count abhorred publicity, and liked to guide events from behind the scenes while someone else assumed responsibility before the public.

Esterhazy had long waited for an opportunity to make a breach in Schmerling's centralist system, and build a bridge between the Emperor and his great kingdom east of the Leitha. The failure of the *Fürstentag* and the diminishing influence of the *Staatsminister* were welcome facts to the Count, who had already silently marked Belcredi for Schmerling's place.¹⁸¹ Meanwhile Franz Joseph was more and more attracted to Esterhazy, by his personal charm and faculty for analysis and by the community of their political ideals. In September 1864, the Emperor's confidence had so far been won, and his resentment at the Magyars undermined, that for the first time in years he trod Hungarian soil.¹⁸² Most important of all, Esterhazy had persuaded his monarch to envisage a new approach to a solution of the Hungarian question, the paramount problem of the Empire, to Franz Joseph's mind. Sooner or later the Schmerling ministry and the centralist system must be overthrown, the constitution suspended, a new federal system established with a sympathetic ministry, and a preferred position for Hungary in the Empire.¹⁸³

If Schmerling did not fit into this program, neither did Rechberg, who strongly opposed any special concessions to Hungary beyond those granted to other non-German provinces by the October diploma of 1860.¹⁸⁴ Esterhazy therefore looked upon Rechberg as an enemy, and it was this unobtrusive minister without portfolio who dealt the final blow to Rechberg's "partition-plan" with Prussia,¹⁸⁵ as well as to his

¹⁸¹ Friedjung II, p. 585 (from Rechberg).

¹⁸² He made a very brief trip to Komorn, on September 19.

¹⁸³ Redlich: *Francis Joseph* pp. 309-310; *Reichsproblem* pp. 364-365.

¹⁸⁴ Engel-Janosi: *Rechberg* p. 150. Rechberg also opposed Esterhazy's plan to unite Transylvania with Hungary, and to appoint Belcredi to the cabinet, and thus increased his enmity (Friedjung II, p. 585).

¹⁸⁵ Engel-Janosi: *Rechberg* p. 149 f. ("die ungarische Partei" means Esterhazy: see Engel-Janosi: *Krise* p. 179).

position in the cabinet.¹³⁶ The place thus vacated could have been Esterhazy's for the asking. It suited him far better to have Mensdorff in the foreign office, one whom he could direct "as a music-master guides his pupil,"¹³⁷ one who would work with him heart and soul to continue the conservative Prusso-phile foreign policy and to overthrow the Schmerling regime at the first opportunity. While the people of Vienna looked upon Mensdorff's appointment as the revenge of Rechberg upon Schmerling, it might well have been viewed as a stroke of Moriz Esterhazy's to increase his own control in the cabinet, for such were the ultimate results.¹³⁸

BIEGELEBEN'S PROGRAM OF FOREIGN POLICY

"The very name of my new minister, Lieutenant Field Marshal Count Mensdorff," wrote Franz Joseph to King William of Prussia, "will convince you that I am fully determined to make no change in the direction of my policy."¹³⁹

¹³⁶ Engel-Janosi: *Krise* p. 165. Friedjung's story (II, p. 585) that Esterhazy was the bearer of an imperial request for Rechberg's resignation has been disproved by Engel-Janosi (*Krise* p. 178).

¹³⁷ Beust II, p. 15.

¹³⁸ It must be admitted that there is no positive evidence that Esterhazy proposed Mensdorff to the Emperor. Esterhazy did not return to Vienna from Hungary until after October 18 (Engel-Janosi: *Krise* p. 165 note 72) and possibly not until after the 25th, but he was undoubtedly in communication with Franz Joseph.

¹³⁹ On October 22, 1864, William had had a conversation with Franz Joseph's cousin, Archduke Leopold, to whom he had given an informal memorandum to be shown to the Kaiser. In this, William expressed the fear that a change of foreign ministers in Austria would work harm to the relations of the two countries. Franz Joseph's reply continues: "Ganz besonders lehne ich den Gedanken auf das Entschiedenste von mir ab, als ob ich den Grafen Rechberg geopfert hätte, weil er bei jeder Gelegenheit der Verteidiger der Allianz zwischen Oesterreich und Preussen war. Ich fühle mich Dir gegenüber gedrungen, eine solche Auslegung des Ministerwechsels für durchaus unbegründet zu erklären, denn unsere gemeinsame Action ist mein persönliches Werk und meine ernstliche Sorge wird unverändert dahin gerichtet sein, unser Bündniss ungeschwächt zu erhalten und noch mehr zu befestigen. Du weisst, wie unerschütterlich ich überzeugt bin, dass unsere Allianz die sicherste Schutzwehr der bestehenden Rechtsordnung gegen die grossen politischen und socialen Gefahren unserer Zeit bildet." (Autograph letter, October 26, 1864, HAA; printed in part by Sybel III, p. 305).

Did this mean that the "Rechberg policy" had been accepted by the Emperor, and the "Schmerling policy" rejected, as the outside world believed, or did it mean something different? Before launching the new minister upon his unwelcome task, it is essential to examine in detail the policy which his imperial master intended that he should carry out. To place it in the proper perspective, it must be projected against the background of the programs advocated by the *Referent* for German affairs and by the retiring minister of foreign affairs.

In a long memorandum of October 19, 1864, Biegeleben tore down the Prussian alliance and constructed an alliance with France.¹⁴⁰ He based his new structure on two principles, both of which Rechberg rejected: (1) that Prussia was a more constant and dangerous enemy than France, and (2) that a *reliable entente* with Napoleon was possible and desirable. Prussia's alliance, he argued, was worthless as a protection against France, unless Austria paid Bismarck's price and gave up her place in Germany. Since this was unthinkable, Bismarck would jump at a French alliance himself. Austria must anticipate him before it was too late.

Biegeleben found it a more difficult task to construct a solid French alliance, with the meager materials at his disposal. How could he meet Napoleon's nationality principle, and the concrete problems of Venetia, Poland, and the Rhine? The principles sponsored by the French Emperor, he argued, were controverted by purely French *Realpolitik*, which demanded that France's neighbors, Italy and Germany, be kept divided. Austria desired the same thing. In addition, France's Catholic party would force Napoleon to preserve the Pope's temporal power hand in hand with Austria. Venetia was the greatest difficulty, Biegeleben admitted, but "it does not seem hopeless to attempt to gain France's goodwill for Austria, even without an exchange of territory." Austria could offer Napoleon the following concrete advantages: (1) "an unreserved recognition of the Napoleonic dynasty"

¹⁴⁰ Memorandum printed in Engel-Janosi: *Krise*, pp. 187-192. It was quite unknown to Friedjung and his predecessors.

(for which the French imperial pair had long been angling);¹⁴¹ (2) further annexations in Italy, such as Genoa and Liguria; (3) support for other Napoleonic projects directed against Italian unity, e.g., the restoration of the Kingdom of Naples; (4) cooperation in the Balkans.¹⁴² Thus Biegeleben gathered up the scraps and thought to tempt Napoleon with this pudding instead of the Venetian pastry the French Emperor had so often asked for.

Before concluding, the *Hofrat* turned aside to demolish the shibboleth of the Austrian conservatives: a coalition of the great powers against France, "the seat of the Revolution." However desirable such an aim might be for Europe and Austria, he wrote, no great power was really willing to sink its own selfish interests in the common crusade. Besides, Austria was unprepared for so tremendous a struggle. Therefore, the only alternative from every point of view was a secure and dependable alliance with France.

As Biegeleben's program stands exposed in this memorandum, it is open to attack on several points. In the first place, his concessions were too meager to win the whole-hearted support of the Emperor Napoleon, whose territorial aims for Italy and for France could only be achieved through a German war or a European congress. If Napoleon should contract the alliance, the activities of the two allies in the Balkans and Italy were sure to raise up a coalition of Russia, Prussia, England, and Sardinia against them. Out of such inflammable material Bismarck could easily fashion a war, in which Austria would be the target for attacks from three sides, while France could make peace and leave her ally in the lurch. How explain such a miscalculation on Biegeleben's part?

¹⁴¹ On the desire of Napoleon and Eugénie for personal relations with the Habsburgs, see the references in Salomon: "Le Prince Richard de Metternich et sa Correspondance pendant son Ambassade à Paris," in *Revue de Paris* XXXI-I, 1924, p. 762 ff.; and in *L'Ambassade de Richard de Metternich à Paris* pp. 95-98.

¹⁴² Often suggested by Napoleon, but always in exchange for territory.

The secret is to be found in the fact that he suppressed half his program. What he must have desired with all his ardent soul, was not so much French aid in Italy and the Balkans, as Napoleon's backing for a *gross-deutsche Politik* in grand style,—revenge for the fiasco in Frankfurt. Again, as before 1859, and as in 1863, he would assemble the *Mittelstaaten* around Austria's banner, and hurl defiance at Prussia. Biegeleben could have little doubt that Bismarck would accept the challenge, that war would result, and that Austria could administer a well-merited thrashing to the "bloated Berliners."¹⁴³ By reconquering Silesia, she could give up Venice with a good grace to Italy, the promise of which, it is permissible to suppose, lay in the back of Biegeleben's mind as a last card to clinch Napoleon's alliance.¹⁴⁴ The cession would serve also to attract England's favor. If Russia joined Prussia, well and good, Austria and France, with the friendly neutrality of England and Italy, could hold their own and more. Thus the French alliance of the *Referent* was in reality (if these surmises be correct) a partial acceptance of Napoleon's offers of 1863,¹⁴⁵ and contained nothing original but the supposition that Franz Joseph would be taken in by it. It would appear therefore that Biegeleben hoped to lure his timid master on to the "western" path by emphasizing an anti-Italian policy (of minor interest to the author of the memorandum but of major interest to the Kaiser) and by suppressing the real issue, which would have frightened him away. Carried out with consistency, foresight, and ingenuity, such a policy might conceivably have met with success.

At the request of the Emperor, Rechberg replied in some

¹⁴³ This was the talk in the *Ballplatz* among the *Referents*, according to Lorenz p. 46

¹⁴⁴ In support of this hypothesis: (1) the wording of Biegeleben's statement that Napoleon's alliance might be obtained "even without territorial changes" implies some doubt. (2) Such an exchange was visualized by the *Ballplatz* in 1863 (see Appendix A, No. 1, below), and (3) actually put into binding form in 1866 (*Origines* X, p. 147).

¹⁴⁵ See above, chapter i.

haste to Biegeleben's memorandum.¹⁴⁶ As the minister had already handed in his resignation, his reply was his *apologia*. Taking for a text the principle that "an exclusive alliance with a single power leads inevitably to complete isolation," he applied this in three ways: first, against the proposed alliance with France. Napoleon would use the alliance to isolate Austria from all the other powers as in 1857-58, and when Austria had lost all her friends, he would kindle a new war in Italy and complete his program of 1859, to the Adriatic.

In the second place, Rechberg did not rebut Biegeleben's attack on the Prussian alliance,—he agreed with him! He did not desire an exclusive engagement with Prussia "which she would keep or break at her own convenience."

Thirdly, Rechberg produced a magic formula of his own: no exclusive alliance, but friendliest relations with all powers.

"Austria and Russia need peace in Europe, England wants it for the sake of her commerce. This common aim can forge such a close bond between the three cabinets that their word cannot be disregarded by the other powers. In this relationship and in improved relations with France, the imperial cabinet will find the sure guarantees that Prussia must back down from the realization of her ambitious plans . . . Austria must avoid staking everything on one card, on one alliance alone."

No one can cavil with Rechberg's principle, but his deduction was faulty. To profess a blind faith in the formula of multiple *ententes* after five years of unsuccessful attempts to fit it to the facts, was utopianism. He had failed to obtain a Russian alliance, or the slightest Russian support against France. The efforts for an alliance with Prussia in 1860 and 1861 were fruitless, and only an unusual combination of events had produced the present alliance. Friendship with France had been difficult to obtain on terms which Franz Joseph was willing to grant. England alone had seemed to prefer Austrian friendship to that of Prussia. Thus the Count had realized less than half of his original program, and was

¹⁴⁶ Rechberg's memorandum, dated October 20, is summarized in Engel-Janosi: *Rechberg* p. 128 f. and printed in extenso in Engel-Janosi: *Krise* pp. 192-195.

guilty of double exaggeration in his memorandum: Russia was not as friendly as he claimed; and the mere "word" of England and Russia and Austria could not stop Bismarck, as the sequel was to prove. If their threats had not preserved the integrity of Denmark, how could they halt Italy at the Mincio, or Prussia at the Main?

The truth is, that this memorandum of October 20, with its minimizing of the Prussian alliance and exaggerating the value of Russian and English support, was a product of the wave of despondency which swept over Rechberg after the rejection of his partition plan by the Emperor, and after Bismarck's disagreement with his neo-Metternich project of peaceful co-operation in German affairs. A more accurate version of Rechberg's system of foreign policy must be sought in other documents and in occasional acts which can be disentangled from the aggregate of Austrian foreign policy since 1855. This policy, far from being Rechberg's alone, was more truly a wavering compound of Rechberg's and Franz Joseph's and Biegeleben's, with the last-named by no means in the minority.¹⁴⁷ The Biegeleben influence, as we have seen in an earlier chapter, too often swayed the Emperor in exactly the opposite direction from Rechberg's own policy, yet as foreign minister, the latter was forced to cover it with his signature.

It would be equally incorrect to put too much faith in Rechberg's post-1866 *apologia*, as Friedjung has done. Nevertheless, these later declarations indicate the spirit and the general direction in which that none too stable minister, in his more far-sighted moments, wished to guide the Austrian bark.¹⁴⁸ In reality, since Rechberg had not found it possible to revive the Metternich constellation in its totality, he had based his policy upon friendly relations with Prussia. In this he was

¹⁴⁷ Professor von Srbik's eventual publication of documents, including papers of Biegeleben, should throw much welcome light on this matter. (Cf his introduction to Rüdiger von Biegeleben's life of his father, p. 7)

¹⁴⁸ For an illustration of the inaccuracy in details but accuracy in main outlines of Rechberg's reminiscences to Friedjung, see Engel-Janosi: *Krise* pp. 175-178.

also interpreting the predilections of his master, and undoubtedly carrying out Franz Joseph's instructions. Admitting that a conflict was inevitable, he would postpone it until Austria had renewed her strength, and until the Italian question had been settled, for he thought that the monarchy was not strong enough to fight on two fronts. If Bismarck could not be trusted, King William *could* be—Rechberg was convinced—if he were treated like an equal in federal matters, and given the Duchies one-half down, and one-half in the future. Conservative dynastic interests bound the monarchs closer together than to France. At Schönbrunn, Rechberg had propounded this doctrine of conciliation and concession in its most complete form, and though Franz Joseph had tabled the partition plan, and Schmerling and Esterhazy had demolished it,¹⁴⁹ had Rechberg remained in office, he would certainly have revived it at the next crisis.¹⁵⁰ If threatened with war and unable to secure other alliances on favorable terms, he would probably have advocated the abandonment of North Germany to Prussia in order to save the Confederation,¹⁵¹ as Metternich himself might have done under similar circumstances.¹⁵² By handling Prussia with gloves, and conceding her demands when kind words no longer sufficed, Rechberg might possibly have put off the struggle for a number of years, perhaps have turned Bismarck's energy against France instead. This was the heart of his *Politik*, more truly than the vagaries of the October memorandum.

A comparison of these systems of the deposed foreign minister and of his *Referent* yields the following conclusions. Both postulated the necessity of alliances to strengthen Austria's position against potential dangers to the *status quo*. Both contemplated a future struggle to regain the old position in

¹⁴⁹ Engel-Janosi *Rechberg* pp 149-150.

¹⁵⁰ Cf his letters to his brother, in Engel-Janosi *Rechberg* pp 145, 147.

¹⁵¹ In 1849 at the nadir of Austria's fortunes, Rechberg had proposed the division of Germany between Austria and Prussia at the Main (Engel-Janosi: *Rechberg* pp 13-14)

¹⁵² Srbik. *Metternich* II, p. 415.

Germany and Italy. To the minister, the chief task was to await and aid the breakup of Italy; to the *Referent*, it was to reduce the King of Prussia to the position of Elector of Brandenburg. Both wished to disarm the lesser opponent with concessions so as to throw Austria's full strength against the major enemy. Yet the spirit hovering over Rechberg's more immediate program was that of peace and conciliation,—ideals that Biegeleben never mentioned. Rechberg's program meant concession, Biegeleben's meant aggression. Each might have led to success if consistently pursued, but that of the Count corresponded more closely to the actual weakness of the Austrian monarchy.

THE FOREIGN POLICY OF FRANZ JOSEPH

Whether he realized all the implications of these divergent systems of foreign policy or not, the Emperor gave careful consideration to the memorandums of his two advisers. After the intermezzo of Rechberg's resignation, he formulated a program of his own in consultation with the outgoing and the incoming foreign ministers, and with the Archduke Rainer, and Prince Metternich.¹⁵³ On October 31, he summoned his council of ministers and read to them his *pronunciamento*, in the manner of a professor lecturing to a class in foreign relations.¹⁵⁴

Franz Joseph began by stressing the need for peace, which was essential to Austria's internal development. Peace must be preserved (1) by avoiding European complications and (2) by forming a solid German *bloc* in middle Europe to overawe France.

He then prescribed the proper attitude for Austria to adopt toward the various states: toward Prussia, continuance of the intimate *entente*; toward the *Mittelstaaten*, protection of their rightful position, without exaggerating it; toward France,

¹⁵³ Billet of Crenneville to Rechberg, October 24 (Engel-Janosi: *Krise* p. 168). It must also have been submitted to Count Moriz Esterhazy, on his return to Vienna.

¹⁵⁴ The following from the protocol of the council. See Appendix A, No. 3.

positively no alliance, but the best possible relations; toward Italy, watchful waiting for an opportunity to enforce the treaty of Zurich; toward England and Russia, the cultivation of good relations, without expectation of material aid.¹⁵⁵

Franz Joseph singled out the Prussian alliance for special consideration. He wished, he said, to go hand in hand with his ally in all important European questions and in solving the problems of Germany. German matters, including the question of the future of Schleswig-Holstein, should be "negotiated" with Prussia before being brought into the Diet. He repudiated Schmerling's scheme to make the *Zollverein* negotiations a test of the alliance, and uttered a sharp warning against playing off the *Mittelstaaten* against Prussia, a procedure which "has proved detrimental by experience and has given them an exaggerated idea of their own importance."

These propositions constitute a complete rejection of the Biegeleben program, and a half-rejection of Rechberg's. Franz Joseph voiced no fear of danger from Prussia, he denounced Biegeleben's French alliance, and avoided Rechberg's exaggerated faith in England and Russia. Yet viewed in the light of the constructive systems of policy advocated by both his advisers, Franz Joseph's program shrinks to its true stature. On the one hand he offered no positive concession which might have secured William's whole-hearted cooperation, for Biegeleben had counselled against strengthening the northern rival. On the other hand, he rejected the French alliance, because his inmost convictions and Rechberg's advice were against it. He therefore completely stultified the positive recommendations of both men by heeding only their warn-

¹⁵⁵ About this time, Franz Joseph outlined his program to his *Referent* for the press, as follows: "My *Politik* will not be changed, it will remain reserved toward France, and will prefer good relations with those states which subscribe to conservative principles." He expressed his displeasure at the press attacks on the Prussian alliance, and continued: "I wish also to maintain friendly relations with the German *Mittelstaaten*, but in view of their disunity and helplessness an alliance with them is partly unattainable, partly without sufficient resources for a practical policy." (October 26, 1864 to Hofrat Fiedler: Vogt p. 45).

ings. In short, Franz Joseph's system was a compound of the prohibitions of Biegeleben and Rechberg, but somewhat closer to the spirit of Rechberg in his insistence on peace and his indication that the enemy lay in the west and south rather than in the north.

The idea of welding Prussia and the German states and Austria into a strong bulwark to resist the "revolutionary" tide from France and Italy did not lack grandeur. It borrowed much from the traditional concept of the Holy Roman Empire as modified by Metternich;¹⁶⁶ it was the soul of the "empire of seventy millions" which Schwarzenberg and Bruck had visioned in vain; it was the corner-stone of the Austrian reform-plan at the Frankfurt congress of princes. The absolute failure of the *Fürstentag* should have taught the young Emperor that the realization of this central European ideal implied one of three things: an utopian willingness on Prussia's part to cooperate with the smaller states under Austrian headship; or the grant of greater influence to Prussia (a concession that Franz Joseph gave little hint of being ready to make); or finally, an Austria powerful enough to force her will upon all of Germany. The Emperor did not perceive, as did Rechberg and even Biegeleben, that the monarchy did not have a firm enough foothold to "keep Prussia on the path of virtue" and at the same time to resist France and Italy, without more definite outside support. Franz Joseph thus betrayed a far too sanguine estimate of the strength of Austria's physical resources, her army, and the spirit of sacrifice of her people. His basic idea that Austria could not afford a policy of adventure, was of course correct. He missed the fact that complete inaction might be as dangerous an adventure, in a Europe which constantly

¹⁶⁶ Cf. Heinrich Ritter von Srbik: "Franz Joseph I." in *Historische Zeitschrift* CXLIV, 1931, Heft 3, pp. 513, 516-519. It seems to me that Franz Joseph can hardly be given much credit for holding ideals which were obviously desirable for Austria, ideals which he did not in the slightest degree originate, and which he was unable to harmonize with the realities of European politics.

moved forward, as a piratical foray against a neighbor state. The mere fact of Austrian chastity would not exorcise the lustful desires of three neighbors; it would only tempt them the more.

In the second place, the Emperor proved more doctrinaire than either of his counsellors. Biegeleben would overlook differences in political principles between Austria and France; Rechberg would stretch the purely legal aspect of the Duchies question. But Franz Joseph could forget neither strict "legitimacy" nor strict federal law and the "rights of sovereigns." More eager than Rechberg to keep Prussia's alliance, he was less willing to pay for it by a sacrifice of sacred principles.

In reality, the Kaiser was not so optimistic over his alliance as his *pronunciamento* seemed to indicate. Four weeks before, he had admitted that Rechberg's complaints were justified, and he had long been agitated over Prussia's "pretensions."¹⁵⁷ The truth was that he wanted to put as good a face as possible on unfavorable circumstances, because he saw no acceptable support from any other quarter.¹⁵⁸ His conception of "honor" forbade him to make concessions to his "inferiors," or to ally himself with the "Revolution." His distrust for bold experiments and expedients, and his tendency to shrink from difficult decisions prevented any constructive change in diplomacy. And his personal prestige was bound up in a policy which he had begun and continued largely on his own initiative.¹⁵⁹

The program of foreign policy which Franz Joseph proclaimed before his council was a compound of grand illusions and of practical aims, of inhibitions and of Habsburg principles. It had only the advantage of inertia: Austria would be hard to move. "Not all Europe combined," he had said

¹⁵⁷ Engel-Janosi: *Rechberg* p. 142 note 3. See, for example, the conversation with Queen Victoria in 1863 (*Letters of Queen Victoria*, second series I, p. 107 f.).

¹⁵⁸ Paul Hassel: *Aus dem Leben des Königs Albert von Sachsen II*, p. 197; Engel-Janosi: *Rechberg* p. 142 note 3.

¹⁵⁹ Franz Joseph to William I, letter of October 26, 1864 (HAA).

to Napoleon at Villafranca, "will induce me to sacrifice a principle. The Austrian Empire may be sacrificed. I had sooner that, than the sacrifice of a principle."¹⁶⁰ Napoleon might well have flung back the wise words of Thouvenel:

"Human politics is the art of transactions; introduce into it the inflexibility of dogmas and you head straight for the abyss"¹⁶¹

¹⁶⁰ *Secrets of the Second Empire* p. 186. For a similar remark in November 1914, see Emmanuel Urbas "Der Kaiser Franz Joseph," in *Preussische Jahrbücher* CCXXI, 1930, Heft 3, p. 268.

¹⁶¹ Quoted in Engel-Janosi: *Reckberg* p. 75.

CHAPTER V

AUSTRIA TACKLES THE PROBLEM OF THE DUCHIES

No one was more cognizant of the tremendous problems facing Austrian diplomacy at the beginning of November 1864, than Franz Joseph's new foreign minister, and probably no one felt less confident of solving them. Nevertheless, Count Mensdorff undertook the burden of office with stoic resignation. He memorized the diplomatic catechism vouchsafed by the Emperor to his council, and quoted its tenets when questioned on Austria's attitude. Under the guidance of Count Esterhazy and with the advice of Prince Metternich and Count Karolyi, he framed the instructions which these envoys took back with them to Paris and Berlin. Strictly speaking, it was Biegeleben who framed the latter, as he did all documents on German affairs. Only rarely did Mensdorff during his two years' ministry draft even a telegram, never a formal instruction. If he wished changes in Biegeleben's draft, a thing which rarely happened in the first year, he stated his wishes orally to Biegeleben, who adopted his own phraseology in the corrections. This procedure in itself gave the *Referent* far more influence in determining the official tone of Austrian diplomacy toward Germany than Abeken, "Bismarck's pen," possessed in the *Wilhelmstrasse*.

The political *rapprochement* with France was to be continued, as Mensdorff at once informed Gramont;¹ and Metternich was to convey similar language to Napoleon.² But the reservations concerning Venetia and the Pope were still

¹ *Origines* IV, p. 347. Rechberg had assured Paris on the day he left office, that the Emperor and Mensdorff would stand by the note of October 12 (Rechberg to Müllinen, tg October 27, 1864).

² Mensdorff to Metternich, November 11, No 1 (printed in *Origines* V, p. 41 ff.) practically a repetition of Rechberg's instructions of October 12.

upheld.³ The ambassador was instructed to express Austria's serious alarm over the defenseless position of the Pope, whose finances were too low to provide an adequate army after the withdrawal of the French troops.⁴ Orally Franz Joseph gave Metternich two diplomatic weapons with which to move Napoleon: if the Pope should be driven from Rome by the Italians, he would offer His Holiness an independent sovereignty within the Austrian dominions;⁵ on the other hand, if Italy would modify her aggressive attitude, Austria might resume "neighborly relations" with her.⁶

Thus equipped, Metternich returned to Paris. At the *Quai d'Orsay*, he parried a suggestion from Drouyn de Lhuys that Austria recognize Italy and join in a guarantee of the September convention.⁷ At Compiègne, late in November, where the Prince and Princess were guests at the annual imperial house-party, he found the opportunity to "push Napoleon into his last trenches" on the Italian question.⁸ The Emperor spoke frankly about Italy,⁹ but to the hint of the offer of territory to the Pope, he merely replied that there was nothing to prevent such a course if Austria judged it expedient.¹⁰ Desiring to tranquillize Franz Joseph completely, Napoleon

³ Mensdorff to Metternich, November 11, No. 2.

⁴ Mensdorff to Metternich, November 11, No. 3.

⁵ Metternich to Mensdorff, November 22, No. 63B; Cowley to Russell, December 6, 1864, No. 998 Most Confidential (F. O. 27 France 1536). Metternich's despatch mentions simply a "permanent residence" in Austria or Venetia. Cowley who undoubtedly got his information directly from Metternich, speaks of "an independent sovereignty within the Austrian dominions. Probably some spot might be ceded between Ragusa and Cattaro." On a note appended to Cowley's despatch, Palmerston wrote, "That would be an excellent arrangement."

⁶ "Rapports de bon voisinage" (Metternich to Mensdorff, November 22, No. 63B; and November 15, No. 60).

⁷ Metternich to Mensdorff, November 22, No. 63B.

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ Napoleon made it clear that he realized the instability of the new state, but would consider its collapse as a check for his personal policy (Metternich to Mensdorff, December 5, No. 65E).

¹⁰ Cowley to Russell, December 12, No. 1021 Most Confidential; the statement reaffirmed "on the best authority," December 15, No. 1043 Most Confidential (F. O. 27 France 1537).

assured Metternich that his troops would not leave Rome until Italy had shown her good faith, and said, "I want Italy to keep what she has—no more, no less; I shall assist . . . a pacific solution . . . of the Venetian question, but Italy would undertake a war against you at her own risk and peril."¹¹ These words could not fail to reassure the *Ballplatz*, and Metternich returned the courtesy by declaring that his government might improve relations with Victor Emanuel if he mended his ways.¹²

Less encouraging was the manifest interest which the French evinced in Bismarck's plans.¹³ Drouyn confessed, that if the Prussian minister-president had been willing to part with North Schleswig, France would have conceded him the rest of the Duchies.¹⁴ From all his observations, Metternich concluded that Napoleon would await events, with the hope of fishing in troubled waters if matters became involved in Germany.¹⁵ The Austrian cabinet therefore decided, that, since no crisis was yet to be anticipated from France and Italy, the reduction of troops in Venetia, already planned as a measure to save money for the hard-pressed budget, should be carried out.¹⁶

More pressing questions were facing Mensdorff in Germany. Should the interrupted commercial negotiations be

¹¹ Metternich to Mensdorff, December 5, No. 65C (printed in *Origines* V, p. 124 ff.). The written report of this conversation was submitted the next day to Napoleon for approval and correction. Metternich said it contained the most essential points raised, and that it "seems to leave nothing to be desired." (Metternich to Mensdorff, December 5, No. 65B). Napoleon's declaration was despatched to Gramont, December 5 (*Origines* V, p. 148).

¹² *Origines* V, pp. 104-105. This projected amelioration of relations is greatly exaggerated by Malaguzzi-Valeri: "Trattative segrete italo-austriache prima della guerra del 1866," in *Rivista d'Italia* October 1905, pp. 505-552.

¹³ Metternich mentions this interest on November 29, December 2 and 5, during the crisis over the federal troops.

¹⁴ Metternich to Mensdorff, December 5, No. 65F, freely quoted by Stern IX, p. 389.

¹⁵ Metternich to Mensdorff, December 5, No. 65F; December 22, No. 68B.

¹⁶ Disarmament had been tentatively agreed upon in council of September 22, the Emperor presiding (Protocol, HHS).

resumed with Prussia? Would William give satisfaction for the Rendsburg *coup*? Would Bismarck back down from his demand that the Hanoverian and Saxon troops leave Schleswig-Holstein? And, most important of all, what was to become of the Duchies?

The first news from Berlin was favorable: Bismarck was preparing a compromise formula for a commercial treaty.¹⁷ The Prussian minister had returned from Biarritz and Paris as determined as ever to win the Duchies for his master.¹⁸ But he was quite willing to put Austria and the *Mittelstaaten* in a good humor, provided it cost him nothing.¹⁹ With great show of friendship,²⁰ Bismarck soon sent to Vienna his new proposal, which, though it did not satisfy Austria's original demand, enabled the Emperor to announce at the opening of the *Reichsrat*, the impending resumption of negotiations. In December, they were begun in Berlin.²¹

With equal amicability, the Rendsburg difficulty was set-

¹⁷ On November 1, Bismarck disclosed his formula in great secrecy to Count Chotek, the Austrian chargé, and begged not to be pressed for a week, while he strove to secure the approval of the King and the dissenting ministers (Chotek to Mensdorff, November 2, No. 85A and private letter). On November 8, Chotek announced that the formula had been put through (Chotek to Mensdorff, tg.).

¹⁸ It is interesting to note that the only stop that he made between Paris and Berlin, was at Essen, to inspect the new artillery works of Krupp, where he dropped this remark: "When I consider something right, and possible of attainment, I intend to carry it out, though the shrewdest people hold it to be impossible." (W. Berdrow: *Alfred Krupp* [Berlin 1927] II, p. 78). The visit took place on October 28 (Kohl: *Bismarck-Regesten* I, p. 243).

¹⁹ Bismarck spoke of his compromise formula as a "worthless concession" (to the *Kronprinz*.—G. W. V, p. 4).

²⁰ Cf. Bismarck to Werther, November 9 (G. W. V, p. 3).

²¹ Mensdorff accepted the compromise on November 20, and asked that the negotiations be held in Berlin instead of Prague (Mensdorff to Karolyi, November 20). Bismarck accepted this on December 6, and urged that the negotiations begin at once (Karolyi to Mensdorff, December 6 tg. No. 144). Since Bismarck had already commenced *pourparlers* for a treaty with France, Austria was forced to drop her original demand for priority. For the resumption of negotiations, see also Hock: "Der Vertrag vom 11 April 1865," in *Oesterreichische Rundschau* 1867, p. 17 ff.

tled.²² The "satisfaction" which Bismarck conceded to his opponents in this matter, however, cost him nothing because it was completely overshadowed by the contemporaneous Prussian diplomatic victory, the withdrawal of the federal troops from the Duchies.

A PRELIMINARY SKIRMISH WITH PRUSSIA

Since the Schönbrunn conference, the problem of the Hanoverian and Saxon troops in Holstein and Lauenburg was still hanging fire.²³ It will be remembered that they had been sent thither a year before by the Diet to carry out the federal execution against Denmark. In October, Rechberg had asked that two thousand men be allowed to remain in occupation until the final settlement of the Duchies' status, and Mensdorff desired the same.²⁴ On November 14, Bismarck politely but firmly rejected these suggestions. Instead, he asked that *all* the troops and the federal *Commissars* be withdrawn at once, not by a vote of the Diet, but at the behest of Prussia and Austria.²⁵ Thus within a fortnight of the peace, the issue of August was reopened, as to whether the Diet (i.e., the rest of Germany) should be excluded or included in settling the fate of two federal states.

Beust was ready to pick up the gauntlet. King Ludwig of Bavaria wired his ministers to prepare to call out the army.²⁶ But Bismarck soon waxed tempestuous, threatened Beust with a "second Rendsburg" if the Saxon troops were

²² For details, see Hassell: *Geschichte des Königreichs Hannover* II, part II, p. 189 f. and *G. W.* V, pp. 12-14.

²³ All accounts of the following incident of November 1864 are based on Sybel IV, pp. 24-29, which contains important errors.

²⁴ Rechberg to Chotek, October 17; *Origines* V, p. 8. Austria still maintained the demand for a federal *Commissar* on the provisional governing commission (Mensdorff to Karolyi, November 19, tg.).

²⁵ *G. W.* V, pp. 5-8. Yet in the previous August, Bismarck had himself suggested a *vote of the Diet* for withdrawal (Bismarck to Werther, August 6, 1864: *G. W.* IV, p. 529), a fact omitted by Sybel.

²⁶ T. Loskarn: *Bayern und die schleswig-holsteinische Frage 1863/64* (Munich dissertation 1928) p. 39.

not withdrawn in short order,²⁷ and insinuated to Vienna that he would act alone if Austria refused her cooperation.²⁸ But Mensdorff countered with a quiet hint that Austria might take the federal troops under her own command, and keep them in Holstein.²⁹ Assured by Karolyi that Bismarck was only bluffing,³⁰ Mensdorff upheld his previous stand. The sole condition on which he would accept the Prussian demand was Bismarck's approval of the Augustenburg candidacy.

"Both powers," he telegraphed Karolyi on the 23rd, "should now communicate the peace treaty to the *Bund*, with the declaration, that they confer upon Augustenburg the rights mentioned in article III, and should move the recall of the federal troops. . . . Press warmly this very appropriate measure, for the Imperial Government cannot pass over it in silence during the forthcoming debate on the address."³¹

These instructions crossed with despatches from Berlin, in which Bismarck still opposed action in the Diet, announced his determination officially to summon Saxony and Hanover to recall their men, and appealed to Mensdorff to avoid the appearance of a disagreement between the allies.³² At the same time came the news that Prussia had ordered her troops to halt in the Duchies, and was concentrating others on the Saxon border.³³ Karolyi now admitted that Bismarck meant business after all.³⁴

Instead of taking alarm at this show of force, as Sybel holds, neither Mensdorff nor his envoy betrayed the slightest sign of retreating. On the contrary, while Karolyi sat down to compose a despatch advising a strong stand,³⁵ he received a

²⁷ Karolyi to Mensdorff, November 19, No. 88B, *Vertraulich*.

²⁸ Bismarck to Werther, November 18, tg. (*G. W. V.*, p. 8 f.).

²⁹ Mensdorff to Karolyi, November 23, tg.

³⁰ Karolyi to Mensdorff, November 19, No. 88B, *Vertraulich*.

³¹ Mensdorff to Karolyi, November 23, tg. Cf. *Origines V*, pp. 86-87.

³² Bismarck to Werther, November 23, Nos. 618, 619 (copies in HHS), and No. 620 (?) *Vertraulich* (*G. W. V.*, p. 15 f.). These reached Vienna probably on November 25.

³³ Bismarck to Werther, November 25, tg. (*G. W. V.*, p. 19; also editor's note). Cf. *Origines V*, p. 98.

³⁴ Karolyi to Mensdorff, November 23, No. 90.

³⁵ Karolyi to Mensdorff, November 26, No. 91A.

wire from his chief rejecting Bismarck's appeal, and repeating the Austrian proposal as the only "correct" procedure.³⁶ It was not therefore, due to a weakening in Austria's attitude, that Bismarck yielded the next day and agreed to allow to the Diet itself the privilege of recalling its troops.³⁷ The truth is, that Bismarck had from the beginning held this conciliatory card in reserve to play as soon as it became evident that Beust, his stoutest foe, would give way.³⁸ On November 27, Beust decided to appeal to the Diet.³⁹ Probably the news of this move determined Bismarck not to be forestalled. From then on, it was the Prussian minister, not the Austrian, who sought to harmonize the action of the two powers.⁴⁰

Mensdorff clung to his demand for a declaration in favor of Augustenburg, then asked if Prussia would prefer to have Austria make it alone.⁴¹ An angry note from the *Ballplatz* on November 27 betrayed the fear that Bismarck would secure his point without paying for it.⁴² Should Austria retaliate by proclaiming openly in the Diet her interest in Augustenburg? Doubtless this issue was fought out in Vienna between Biegeleben and Esterhazy. Prince Anton of Hohenzollern, who at this moment was enjoying Habsburg hospitality on a friendly mission from King William, may well have swung the Emperor to conciliation.⁴³ Karolyi's

³⁶ Mensdorff to Karolyi, November 26, tg.

³⁷ Sybel's account, IV, p. 28, therefore needs correction; likewise, Stern IX, p. 398. Mensdorff did not yield until late on the 28th.

³⁸ Hohenthal to Beust, November 4 and 18 (Friesen: *Erinnerungen aus meinem Leben* II, pp. 108, 109).

³⁹ Freisen II, p. 110.

⁴⁰ Cf. *Origines* V, p. 99, where Bismarck admits this.

⁴¹ Mensdorff to Karolyi, November 27, tg.

⁴² Mensdorff to Karolyi, November 27, Nos. 1 and 2.—Mensdorff hinted that Austria would declare her intentions in the Diet. Bismarck urged Karolyi to refrain from such an act (Karolyi to Mensdorff, November 28, tg. No. 138).

⁴³ On this Hohenzollern mission, see K. T. Zingeler: "Briefe des Fürsten Karl Anton von Hohenzollern an seine Gemahlin Josephine," in *Deutsche Revue* XXXIX, 1914, Heft 2, pp. 188-192.

plan of resistance was rejected. At the very last moment before the Diet met to receive the communication of the Vienna treaty, Mensdorff wired Kübeck to join Prussia in presenting it, and to limit his own words to a harmless declaration, which left Augustenburg completely out of the picture.⁴⁴ At the same time, he sent an urgent plea to Bismarck and to Beust, to refrain from fireworks.⁴⁵ Beust might crow that he had brought Bismarck to the Diet,⁴⁶ but the latter won the vote, by a small majority. Since Austria had meanwhile dropped her demand for a federal commissioner,⁴⁷ the Duchies were henceforth to be governed and manned solely by the two allied powers.⁴⁸

In this "second Rendsburg" Austria should have seen the writing on the wall. Bismarck intended it both as a test of the alliance,⁴⁹ and as a warning. "We have," he confided to Lord Napier, "a very good custom in Germany, where we turn out the cattle into the fields in spring. We let the bulls fight it out without interfering with them. The strongest gets the upper hand, the question is settled, and peace prevails among the herd for the rest of the summer.—That is what I have done. I have fought it out, and I shall have less trouble in future."⁵⁰ Bismarck thus showed Austria how different his conception of dualism was from that of Rechberg. He was quite ready to disregard his ally, to take action alone, when his interests demanded it.⁵¹

This was all the more disillusioning to Franz Joseph, because the Emperor was conscious of having acted loyally to-

⁴⁴ Mensdorff to Werther, November 29, letter.

⁴⁵ Mensdorff to Werner, November 28 and tg, December 5; Mensdorff to Karolyi, November 29, tg. A few days later, Franz Joseph sent a personal request to William, "not to put the peace of Germany at stake." (Mensdorff to Karolyi, December 5, tg.).

⁴⁶ Cf. *Origines* V, p. 107.

⁴⁷ Mensdorff to Karolyi, December 2, tg.

⁴⁸ Bismarck to Ladenberg, December 6 (*G. W. V.*, p. 36 f.).

⁴⁹ Karolyi to Mensdorff, No. 89B.

⁵⁰ Napier to Russell, November 30, No. 10 Confidential (F. O. 64 Prussia 566).

⁵¹ Cf. *G. W. V.*, pp. 26, 27, 28.

ward Prussia: Mensdorff had striven to keep Saxony and the Diet from interfering in the Austro-Prussian parleys.⁵² Prussia's use of the mailed fist placed Biegeleben in a stronger position, for he could now say, "I told you so." Franz Joseph began to see the necessity of taking a firmer tone than he had anticipated, and a certain asperity was henceforth introduced into the reciprocal relations, for it was clear to all that the first disagreement between the allies since the peace, had been settled against Austria almost at the point of the sword.

NEGOTIATIONS WITH PRUSSIA

Early in October the *Ballplatz* had received the first official hint of Bismarck's new (i.e. post-Schönbrunn) program for the future status of the Duchies. Just before the Prussian minister had left for Biarritz, he had told Count Chotek that, if annexation could not be realized, at least Prussia must obtain "the most extensive political, military, and commercial concessions" from the new ruler.⁵³ Prussia had no confidence, he said, in the Prince of Augustenburg, "a true son of his father":⁵⁴ the personality of the Grand Duke of Oldenburg was considered a much better guarantee.⁵⁵ Vienna was thus duly forewarned that the Prussian alternatives in the impending negotiations would be, either annexation without compensation to Austria (except money), or practical vassalage of the Duchies, under the Oldenburger. Mensdorff's problem was therefore to sidetrack this unacceptable program, evolve an Austrian solution, and secure William's approval for it. Since the new minister had not had sufficient time to orient himself in the mazes of the question, Count

⁵² Mensdorff to Werner, November 19, No. 102. Similar instructions were sent to other German states.

⁵³ Chotek to Rechberg, October 3, No. 80B *Geheim*.

⁵⁴ Possibly Bismarck's personal sense of having been "double-crossed" by Prince Christian August, whose renunciation he had arranged, influenced somewhat his determination never to let Prince Friedrich become ruler.

⁵⁵ Chotek to Rechberg, October 3, No. 80B *Geheim*.

Esterhazy called in Prince Metternich and Count Karolyi to assist him.⁵⁶ Biegeleben, too, made his influence felt.

Varied, indeed, were the views of these five. Neither Esterhazy nor Mensdorff had any fondness for the democratic Augustenburg nor for his henchmen, the democratic *Mittelstaaten*. Both were willing to let Prussia have the Duchies if only Austria's face could be saved.⁵⁷ Prince Metternich, who saw the situation with remarkable clarity, urged the Emperor "to dispense with all half-measures and take a positive stand," either to inaugurate a realistic exchange of concessions with Prussia,—allowing free play in the north, but demanding an understanding on federal relations,—or else to adopt a definite *Bundpolitik* against Prussia.⁵⁸ This latter alternative was, of course, championed once more by Biegeleben, undaunted by the flat rejection of his French alliance

⁵⁶ Mensdorff's memorandum for Franz Joseph, October 26, 1866 (*Preussische Jahrbücher* CLXXX, 1920, Heft 3, p. 338).

⁵⁷ Mensdorff's remarks to Werther (Sybel IV, p. 37); Esterhazy's remarks (Werther to Bismarck, February 27, 1865, No. 57, HAA). They were supported by Count Blome, the envoy in Munich, who wrote at this time to Mensdorff: "Dangerous and inconvenient as it may seem, nothing remains for us today but to stand in well with the Berlin Cabinet. . . . It is high time to cease 'meddling and muddling' in Germany, where we are neither willing nor able to bite." (Letter of October 29.)

⁵⁸ Metternich's remarks to Vitzthum (Vitzthum p. 66). To Count Goltz, Metternich later said: ". . . vor mehreren Monaten, habe er während seiner Anwesenheit in Wien die Tendenz, Gefühlspolitik zu treiben, gefunden. Der Kaiser . . . wünsche aus persönlichen Sympathien das Bündniss mit Preussen aufrecht zu erhalten, und Graf Mensdorff folge ihm darin. Dagegen ständen [Sie] . . . in entschiedenem politischen Gegensatze zu Preussen, und seien Sie nicht geneigt, politische Opfer zu bringen. Ihm (dem Fürsten Metternich) würde es lieber sein, wenn die persönlichen Gefühle weniger im Vordergrund ständen, dagegen in eine ernsthafte Auseinandersetzung der politischen Concessionen . . . getreten würde. Eine solche würde, seiner Ansicht nach, dahin führen können, dass die Interessen Preussens im Norden sichergestellt würden und sich andererseits beide Mächte über die Bundesverhältnisse vollständig einigten. Oesterreich sucht Sicherstellung, sei es durch das Bündniss mit Preussen, sei es durch Verständigung mit Frankreich." (Goltz to Bismarck, February 14, 1865, No. 63, Copy, AGEV). Friedjung's unsupported statement (*Kampf* I, p. 103), that Metternich threatened to give up his position if Schleswig-Holstein was abandoned, seems not to tally with these sources.

project. And Count Karolyi, who had not penetrated Bismarck's mind nor measured his full stature, probably expressed the opinion that Prussia would yield under firm pressure.⁵⁹ By November 12, a program was sketched out, submitted to the Emperor, and formulated by Biegeleben in four despatches, which Karolyi took with him to Berlin.⁶⁰

In brief, the envoy was instructed to offer Prussia two alternative solutions. The more desirable, despite Bismarck's warning, was the erection of the three Duchies into a single independent state under the Prince of Augustenburg. In somewhat too grandiloquent language, Prussia was urged, in the name of the alliance and harmony in the Confederation, to forego the temptation to *annex or mediatise* the new state. Karolyi was ordered to stress the danger of leaving the question open, and to press for an acceptance of this program without delay.⁶¹

In a fourth despatch, Karolyi was given a second alternative, in case Prussia insisted upon annexation.

He might confidentially and orally inform Bismarck and William, that Austria must uphold the principle of territorial compensation. Since it was "a moral and political impossibility" for Austria to accept land from *other* states, perhaps "the advantageous geographical position of the Duchies might lend them such a high value in the eyes of the Royal Prussian Government, that it would not recoil from the resolve to compensate Austria for her share, through cession of territory. Only on this supposition, but without leaving any doubt as to the disinclination of the Imperial Court against such transactions, and only as a proof of the wish in Vienna to exhaust all possibilities of fortifying the Prussian alliance,—is

⁵⁹ This may be deduced from Karolyi's advice in late November (Karolyi to Mensdorff, November 26, No. 91A), and in February 1866 (Karolyi to Mensdorff, February 11, 1866).

⁶⁰ Karolyi had been absent from his post since the previous May. Sybel IV, p. 23, gives the erroneous impression that the envoy had been called from Berlin at this time (November).

⁶¹ Mensdorff to Karolyi, November 12, Nos. 1, 3, and 4 *Reservirt*; copies of these three notes were left with Bismarck. Sybel's summary of them is on the whole fair, and his strictures are deserved. He omitted one point scored by Biegeleben, viz. that Austria would not exercise her manifest right to know about Bismarck's negotiations with Augustenburg and Oldenburg (Mensdorff to Karolyi, November 12, No. 1).

Your Excellency empowered to negotiate on the basis of . . . a cession of approximately half the Duchies in extent and population, whereby Hohenzollern and the Silesian border districts might be considered." ⁶²

As for Lauenburg, its legal status made its annexation to Prussia less objectionable to Austria, and presumably to the German states and European powers. But, for the cession of her half, Austria reserved the right to ask for "some sort of frontier rectification in Silesia, if only insignificant, as well as financial advantages." Again it was repeated that Austria would enter such a negotiation "with hesitation, yes, with scruples." ⁶³

What a collection of contradictions this program presented! After preaching against annexation from the Holy Script of the federal constitution, Austria was ready to break her ten commandments for a sufficiently large bribe of land; and though considering it beneath his dignity and honor to accept money for his share of the Duchies, Franz Joseph admitted that he might be persuaded to salve his conscience for "part cash." This Pooh-Bah attitude was the more unfortunate because the Emperor was sincere in his aversion to trading citizens for money, and vastly preferred a legal, federal solution to a questionable *Bismarckian dénouement*.⁶⁴ Sybel admirably sums up the thoughts of the *Hofburg*:

"Hold fast to Prussian friendship, but also hold fast to the 'correct' decision over Schleswig-Holstein. Once Prussia appreciated Austria's calm, firmness and true federal spirit, she would submit in the end, as Frederick William IV had submitted. . . . The object was not to turn her back on Prussia, as Schmerling wished, and join anew with the western powers; but to draw Prussia over to the Vienna program, and then to grasp her hand in firmer friendship." ⁶⁵

⁶² Mensdorff to Karolyi, November 12, No. 2 *Reservirt*.

⁶³ *Ibid.*—Sybel knew only vaguely of these purely oral compensation *pourparlers*. Cf. IV, p. 23.

⁶⁴ "Diese Andeutung [land compensation] hat übrigens im Grunde nur den Zweck haben können, dem Berliner Cabinet die weitreichenden und bedenklichen Consequenzen seiner Hinneigung zu neuen territorialen Combinationen recht deutlich vor Augen zu führen." (Draft memorandum in Biegeleben's hand, c. December 6, 1864. Cf. Friesen II, pp. 115-116).

⁶⁵ Sybel IV, pp. 18-19.

Franz Joseph's ideal remained as he had stated it, to cement the *bloc* of seventy million Germans in the Confederation against the revolutionary Caesar of the Seine.⁶⁶ In short, the Emperor was launching Austria upon uncertain seas, not with a policy of realities, nor yet a policy of practical idealism, but as Metternich well said, a policy of sentiment, "*Gefühlspolitik*."⁶⁷

With considerable curiosity, the *Ballplatz* awaited news of their diplomatic offensive. A telegram from Karolyi soon broke the suspense:

"My first interview with Herr von Bismarck, which took on at once a very frank and confidential character, left me with the impression that the annexation tendency has made progress, but that territorial compensations will be refused. Bismarck mentioned grandiose money equivalents, which through finance operations could completely rehabilitate our credit. Between Augustenburg and Oldenburg, Bismarck prefers the latter, because his personality is a better guarantee, and Emperor Alexander warmly favors his candidacy.⁶⁸ Prussia must lay the greatest stress on maritime advantages in the Duchies. I shall run against the greatest difficulties with His Majesty the King in trying to secure a quick and final conclusion."⁶⁹

Mensdorff soon replied:

"I request Your Excellency to stand firm on the basis of your instructions, which are the fruit of the most mature judgment on the situation. Prussia now knows exactly what we have to offer her. Beyond that we cannot go. The idea of a money compensation cannot be too emphatically rejected. Recall Herr von Bismarck's oft-repeated remark, that the King at heart was for the Augustenburg solution,⁷⁰ and press for a rapid decision."⁷¹

⁶⁶ See protocol in Appendix B, No. 3. The idea recurs in the Biegeleben memorandum of c. December 6.

⁶⁷ Small wonder that Metternich returned "crestfallen" to Paris (Goltz to Bismarck, letter of November 25: *Bismarck-Jahrbuch* V, p. 247).

⁶⁸ See Alexander's remark to Bismarck, November 3, 1864 (*Origines* V, p. 95.—The editors of the *Origines* have incorrectly placed this interview in June).

⁶⁹ Karolyi to Mensdorff, November 14 [15?] tg. No. 130, 9:08 a. m. Bismarck was "etwas angedonnert" by the Austrian notes, and gave up an incipient attempt to revamp his Schönbrunn idea: to postpone the Duchies solution until some future European complication arose, when Austria would need Prussian help (Karolyi to Mensdorff, November 19, No. 88A).

⁷⁰ Probably uttered to Biegeleben in April 1864, and perhaps to Rechberg.

⁷¹ Mensdorff to Karolyi, November 15, tg.

The following day, after a second encounter with Bismarck, Karolyi continued his telegraphic report:

"... [Bismarck states] that the giving up of the annexation idea would depend on the *extent* of the military and maritime advantages to be acquired, which would consist chiefly of an independent Prussian war-harbor and naval establishment, as well as the right to draft sailors. These advantages could be obtained in Schleswig. In addition, Prussia must count on a military convention. . . . For the eventual annexation of Lauenburg alone, our demand for a frontier rectification as well as money has made a very bad impression on Bismarck, and will make the worst possible impression on the King. . . ." ⁷²

After some reflection in the *Ballplatz*, Mensdorff wired:

"We must maintain the condition, that Schleswig-Holstein may not enter the *Bund* as a half-sovereign state, just as firmly as our stand on the territorial question. In order to judge how compatible the maritime concessions are with the independence of a federal state, we must know them precisely. Press for their detailed formulation. You may hint, as your own personal view, that a naval station on the analogy of the federal fortresses, and the right of acquiring (not drafting) sailors, might not be opposed in Vienna." ⁷³

On November 19, Karolyi had his first audience with the King, whom he found more conciliatory than Bismarck had led him to believe. ⁷⁴ Though William finally and definitely rejected a territorial exchange, he raised no great objections to an understanding over concessions, and promised to discuss their definite formulation at once with Bismarck. ⁷⁵ Karolyi's tactful insistence made too good an impression on the King to suit his chief minister, ⁷⁶ who had already introduced further difficulties into the negotiations with the demand for the removal of the federal troops. During the ensuing fracas the Austrians, as we have seen, tried to force the Augusten-

⁷² Karolyi to Mensdorff, November 16, tg. No. 131.

⁷³ Mensdorff to Karolyi, November 18, tg.

⁷⁴ Karolyi to Mensdorff, November 22, No. 89A. The King, for instance had been greatly pleased with Franz Joseph's letter, and laid less stress on the Schmerling influence, than Bismarck did in conversation with Karolyi. Bismarck had tried to make the envoy believe that the King would yield *less* to Austria than he (Bismarck) was ready to yield.

⁷⁵ Karolyi to Mensdorff, November 22, No. 89A.

⁷⁶ *Origines* V, p. 131.

burg solution through as a condition of their approval, but without success.

Karolyi's ray of hope, too, was soon extinguished.

"The tendency towards systematic procrastination . . . is obvious," he wrote. "Should an understanding [on concessions] be reached, Prussia would probably throw her vote to Augustenburg. Should it fail, through Prussia's exaggerated demands, Bismarck will make every effort to keep the whole matter open as long as possible. In this case he will take refuge in all sorts of juridical investigations of the succession question and perhaps even attempt to revive the annexation idea by introducing the Brandenburg claims."⁷⁷

Again a few days later. "The desire to drag out the whole affair, despite assurances to the contrary, is evident on every side."⁷⁸

The Austrians were at last compelled to look the facts in the face. With the departure of the Saxon and Hanoverian legions from Holstein, the most effective means of pressure on Prussia disappeared. Henceforth, since the *Bund* was physically excluded from a share in settling the problem, Franz Joseph considered himself more than ever morally bound to represent its interests.⁷⁹ On the other hand, it was realized now that Bismarck, after delaying as long as he could, would probably present such heavy demands that Austria could not accept them. A deadlock was bound to ensue. The *Provisorium* would have to be continued indefinitely, while the Duchies gradually succumbed to Prussian propaganda and wearily asked for annexation. Though Austria dreaded the doctrine of self-determination, she had to admit its appeal to European public opinion, which influenced the majority of governments. Austria's most effective trump was, after all, the fact that the Duchies now did not want to join Prussia. The problem before the Austrian cabinet was, therefore, either to reach a settlement before the adverse change could occur, or to prevent such a change by using Prussia's

⁷⁷ Karolyi to Mensdorff, November 19, No. 88A.

⁷⁸ Karolyi to Mensdorff, November 25, tg. No. 136.

⁷⁹ Draft memorandum by Biegeleben, c. December 6.—A circular telegram, December 2, assured the *Mittelstaaten*, that Austria would "do everything to shorten the *Provisorium* and put through the establishment of an independent state, Schleswig-Holstein." (from copy to Dresden).

methods against her, i.e., by encouraging the Augustenburg anti-annexation propaganda.

There were several possible short-cuts to a settlement: Austria might accept a huge money-payment; or she might divide the Duchies, giving Schleswig to Prussia and taking Holstein for herself, either to hold for a later cession in exchange for Prussian aid against France, or to hand over to the Diet for disposal, or to cede directly to the Prince of Augustenburg. These solutions were peaceful but humiliating for the Habsburger. On the other hand, Austria might consider her duty to the Diet higher than her alliance-obligations toward Prussia, and against Prussia's protest, confer the Austrian half-rights in the undivided Duchies upon the Diet, or the Prince, or submit the entire Schleswig-Holstein question to the Diet for solution. Any one of these acts might be the signal for war.

The only means of escape from this dilemma of humiliation or war was to continue the present interim regime and strive to prevent the deterioration of Austria's pawn. After all, by article 5 of the January protocol, Prussia was bound *not* to annex the Duchies without Austria's consent.

Probably no one in Vienna visualized the problem as simply as this. The Emperor had decided against the partition of the Duchies, or the acceptance of Prussian gold,—except for Lauenburg. But the triumvirate of counsellors in the *Ballplatz* were already contemplating three different solutions: (1) to combat more strenuously the Prussian campaign in the Duchies, in the hope of discouraging Bismarck and extorting better terms from him;⁸⁰ or (2) to claim Holstein and cede it to the Prince or the Diet;⁸¹ or (3) to submit

⁸⁰ The first hint of this method, eventually adopted in March, is to be found in a passage of Biegeleben's first draft for the long note of December 21, 1864, but omitted from the final draft. The second mention of the idea occurs in Mensdorff to Karolyi, February 4, 1865.

⁸¹ This is evidently what Mensdorff meant by his remark to Count Bray, in December (*Origines* V, p. 256). That this solution might not be opposed by Prussia is indicated in Bismarck's remark to Rayneval, in January (*Ibid.* V, p. 294).

the whole matter to the Frankfurt Assembly and accept the gage of battle with Bismarck.⁸² Public opinion in both countries had been aroused by the affair of the federal troops. The threat of war was uttered for the first time in the Austrian *Reichsrat*,⁸³ and printed in the conservative Prussian *Kreuzzeitung*.⁸⁴ Though the danger from an Italian attack was not acute, yet Bismarck might at any time make some unpleasant side-spring while the situation in the Duchies remained embroiled, and the realization of this produced an increasing *malaise* in the *Ballplatz*.⁸⁵ Certainly the prospect was not alluring for those who still supported the alliance; and Mensdorff began to complain openly of the "miserable inheritance from the Rechberg period."⁸⁶

For a short time in early December, however, the prospect seemed to grow brighter. Karolyi wrote that annexation was "morally sidetracked," and that sooner or later Prussia would accept the Prince.⁸⁷ His opinion was shared by the well-in-

⁸² Though this idea had probably been visualized by Biegeleben as early as May 1864, it does not appear in the sources till the autumn: Mensdorff's supposed remark to Prince Hohenzollern, November 25 (*Origines* V, p. 102); Mensdorff to Blome, letter of December 6 (repeated in Blome's letter to Mensdorff, December 8); Mensdorff's words to Wydenbruck, December 11 (Jansen-Samwer, p. 424); Karolyi to Mensdorff, December 17, No. 95; Gramont to Drouyn, December 22 (*Origines* V, p. 228); and Mensdorff's words in council of January 11, 1865 (protocol, HHS).—Bismarck anticipated this action (*Origines* V, p. 186).

⁸³ Schindler sarcastically sketched the history of the Prussian alliance, and concluded: ". . . so endete der Feldzug zur Vermeidung der europäischen Verwicklung, das Unternehmen, hinter dem jetzt wie ein Gespenst der deutsche Bürgerkrieg steht. . . ." (*Stenographische Protokolle über die Sitzungen des Hauses der Abgeordneten des Reichsrathes*, III Session, I, p. 122). Giskra, Kuranda, and other leading deputies also attacked the Prussian alliance.

⁸⁴ On December 1, the *Kreuzzeitung* wrote: "Preussen werde seinen Anteil an Schleswig-Holstein nötigenfalls mit dem Schwerte verteidigen." (Ritter: *Die preussischen Konservativen und Bismarck's deutsche Politik*, p. 122 f.).

⁸⁵ Mensdorff to Karolyi, December 14.

⁸⁶ Cf. protocol of council, January 11 (HHS). Similar remarks by Mensdorff were reported by Werther (Sybel IV, p. 20), by Gramont (*Origines* V, p. 337), by Flemming (*G. W. V.*, p. 130 f.), whose report was brought to William's attention by Bismarck!

⁸⁷ Karolyi to Mensdorff, December 9, No. 94A. Cf. Jansen-Samwer p. 424.

formed Russian envoy, and by the new ambassadors of England and France, Lord Napier and Count Benedetti.⁸⁸ Bismarck lent color to this opinion by offering to install Augustenburg at once, subject to recall if he did not accept Prussia's terms,—a plan too dangerous for Karolyi to approve.⁸⁹ But all this optimism was clearly ill-founded as long as Bismarck withheld information as to the full extent of Prussia's conditions for the new state.

An exchange of official notes between the allies in December sounded like a fanfare. Karolyi had been ordered to the charge once more,⁹⁰ and at last on December 13, Bismarck vouchsafed a reply to the Austrian proposals of November 12. In resolute tones he challenged the *Bundesrecht*, and championed Prussia's material interests in the Duchies, which he held to be greater than Austria's. Prussia must have security against external dangers and internal revolution. Annexation would not harm Austria, but the Austrian demand for territory was unacceptable. Prussia's conditions for independence of the Duchies were therefore being formulated, and would be sent for Austria's approval. Bismarck reverted to the unpleasant affair of the federal troops, and repeated his threat not to submit to a hostile majority in a Diet dominated by democratic parliaments.⁹¹

Bismarck's frank, and somewhat pugnacious, assertion of Prussian *Realpolitik* stirred Biegeleben to an equally frank

⁸⁸ Napier to Russell, November 30, No. 10 (F. O. 64 Prussia 566); Benedetti to Drouyn de Lhuys, November 28 (*Origines* V, p. 101).

⁸⁹ Karolyi to Mensdorff, December 9, No. 94A.

⁹⁰ Mensdorff to Karolyi, December 3.—Sybel's quotation from this note (IV, p. 20) sharpens its tone by excisions. He also omits Mensdorff's sensible suggestion, that the Grand Duke of Oldenburg should submit his claims to arbitration.—On December 14, Mensdorff again sent Karolyi to speed up the Prussian reply.

⁹¹ Bismarck to Ladenberg, December 13, Nos 655 and 656 (copies in HHS; printed in *G. W. V.*, pp. 39-47; summarized in Sybel IV, p. 35 f. and *Origines* V, pp. 189-191).—Ladenberg was in charge of the Prussian embassy while Werther was in Berlin, from c. December 2 to c. December 20.

rejoinder, which after much toning-down was sent to Berlin on December 21.⁹²

If Prussia owed it to herself to obtain security for her own interests, he argued, so did Austria for hers. "If Prussia expands in Germany, the Imperial Monarchy must expand equally." If Prussia should try to prolong the *condominium* indefinitely, "there would remain no other alternative but to transform the ideal partnership based on the peace treaty, into a real partition of the common possession. But the force of circumstances . . . is as strongly opposed to such an end of the Schleswig-Holstein question as to an . . . enlargement of Prussia. . . . The public conscience in Germany is deeply stirred. Not much longer will . . . our confederates let themselves be held back from voicing their opposition . . . in the form of definite resolutions. We ourselves will no longer be able to refuse to declare our intentions—a thing that we have so far avoided in the interest of the desired understanding with Prussia." Once more Biegeleben warned against creating a vassal state in a Diet of independent sovereigns. Prussia's demands could not be judged by any other standard than that of the federal pact.⁹³

Obviously, Franz Joseph's "calm firmness" was giving way under the stress of the continual delay.

Nevertheless Bismarck had no intention of abandoning his role of *Fabius Cunctator*.⁹⁴ In fact, he had just added a new page to his program of procrastination: the reference of the

⁹² Mensdorff to Karolyi, December 21, Nos. 1 and 2 (drafts revised three times, with many excisions, HHIS).—Thimme's *résumé* of No. 1 is correct, of No. 2 incorrect (*G. W. V.*, p. 60). Sybel's brief *résumé* of both notes in four lines is utterly tendentious (IV, p. 37.—Cf. Keudell: *Fürst und Fürstin Bismarck*, p. 186 note 1).

⁹³ Mensdorff to Karolyi, December 21, No. 2.

⁹⁴ Bismarck's remark to Barral (Jansen-Samwer p. 423). See also his frank remarks to Benedetti (*Origines* V, p. 143 f. and p. 185 ff.).—Had it been in his interest to present Prussia's demands as quickly as possible, Bismarck could obviously have set the wheels in motion before his trip to Biarritz, and have presented them to Austria by the middle of November. Instead of that, he waited until December before calling for reports from the ministers of war, the navy, and commerce (*G. W. V.*, p. 96). The report of the commerce ministry was finished in December (Chotek to Mensdorff, letter of December 31), Roon's report on January 7. Again Bismarck waited a month before charging Abeken to put it into a form acceptable to him ("Anfang Februar," *G. W. V.*, p. 96). Thus almost two months were spent in conscious procrastination.

sovereignty question to the Prussian crown judges.⁹⁵ Austria was notified that upon their report William's decision would have to wait.⁹⁶ By this means, Bismarck counted on a further delay of many months. Whatever the outside world might think of the report, it would satisfy William's conscientious scruples, and inform him exactly how much "right" he had against the claims of Augustenburg and Oldenburg.⁹⁷

But in the meantime, Austria might rebel against such treatment, and appeal to the Diet or deed away her rights, thus prematurely forcing a rupture before Bismarck had had time to create annexationist sentiment in the Duchies, and to harden William's heart. The crisis must come when he (Bismarck) was ready, not before. In order to slow down the tempo and prepare a more favorable *terrain* in Vienna for annexation, Bismarck gave up polemics for the present, and appealed directly to the *Hofburg*. Through Prince Anton of Hohenzollern and through Werther, the *Wilhelmstrasse* had learned that the Emperor and his immediate *entourage* still supported the alliance, but considered it only fair that Austria should receive a share of the profits from the Danish war.⁹⁸ The last note from Vienna had loudly proclaimed that Austria could not go empty-handed. Seizing upon this theme, Bismarck became once more the honey-tongued seducer of Schönbrunn.⁹⁹

⁹⁵ Bismarck to the King, December 14 (*G. W. V.*, p. 49 ff.). Neither Rechberg nor Mensdorff had been able to reach an agreement with Bismarck upon a suitable legal tribunal to decide this highly complicated question.

⁹⁶ Bismarck to Werther, January 26, 1865 (*G. W. V.*, p. 65).

⁹⁷ Bismarck to the King, December 14 (*G. W. V.*, p. 49 ff.).

⁹⁸ For the mission of Prince Hohenzollern to Vienna, see note 43 above. Baron Werther was called to Berlin in December. He had interviews with Bismarck on December 5 and 8, and a farewell audience with the King on December 18 (Kohl: *Bismarck-Regesten* I, pp. 246-247). He seems not to have been given special instructions to carry back (*Origines* V, p. 228), unless to put out feelers in the Vienna financial world regarding a money compensation.

⁹⁹ Since these overtures have hitherto remained almost unknown, they will be described here in some detail. Sybel, Friedjung, and Stern are silent on the subject, and there is little trace of them in the Berlin archives.

In a conversation with Count Chotek,¹⁰⁰ who was again filling Karolyi's place, the minister-president conjured up anew all the glowing visions with which he had tried to enchant the Emperor and Rechberg four months before:¹⁰¹ generous financial rewards,—a future war to reconquer the north of Italy,¹⁰²—a partition of the Duchies between the two powers.¹⁰³ Though Chotek turned a deaf ear to these seductions, Mephistopheles resumed the *séance* twenty days later.¹⁰⁴ He had been much impressed, he said, with some words of Franz Joseph, which smacked of true Habsburg dynastic policy: "After the war fought *in common*, Prussia cannot alone win territory and Austria go empty-handed." He therefore wished to renew his former suggestion as a serious proposition, and (borrowing the happy phrase of Biegeleben's)¹⁰⁵ he formally proposed "to transform the ideal partnership, based on the treaty, into a real partition of the common territory." He pointed out the fact that the balance of power would not be disturbed, he elaborated upon the advantages of such a northern possession for Austria, he refuted all counter-arguments,¹⁰⁶ and ended emotionally with the plea

¹⁰⁰ On December 29, 1864.

¹⁰¹ A full account is given in Chotek's letter to Mensdorff, December 31. —Bismarck began significantly with the remark, that the federal pact by itself formed too barren a basis for the alliance, as 1859 proved. By his proposal in the note of December 13, that both powers should grant each other *more* than the federal pact bound them to do, he had meant this: that neither one could sit by and permit the destruction—"yes, not even the serious injury"—of the other!

¹⁰² Cf. Beust: *Aus Drei Vierteljahrhunderten* II, p. 479.

¹⁰³ "Wenn es nicht anders sei," said Bismarck, "so würde er noch am ehesten darauf eingehen, dass die bisher ideale Teilung der drei Herzogtümer zwischen den zwei Grossmächten in eine *reelle* faktische verwandelt würde." (Chotek's letter to Mensdorff, December 31).

¹⁰⁴ January 18, 1865, late in the evening.—Bismarck had taken a vacation for his health and under-secretary von Thile had been absent fourteen days.

¹⁰⁵ In the note of December 21.

¹⁰⁶ Mensdorff in a recent letter had supplied Chotek with a sheaf of objections against partition: viz. the opposition of Europe, the Duchies, and the *Bund*, legal and political difficulties (Letter not found, but reconstructed from Chotek to Mensdorff, January 20, No. 6A *Geheim*. See Appendix A, No. 5).

that Austria keep Holstein as a pawn to reward Prussia eventually for help against Italy.¹⁰⁷ To clinch matters, Bismarck sent this message to the chargé the next day:

"whatever the solution of the Schleswig-Holstein question, Prussia would renounce a single-handed [*einseitig*] acquisition of the Duchies, in order to avoid . . . the slightest cooling . . . of the intimate alliance relationship."¹⁰⁸

Simultaneously with these overtures, Prince Friedrich Karl, commander of the combined forces in the Danish war, and nephew of the King, was sent to Vienna, ostensibly to thank Franz Joseph for a high decoration, and formally to give up the command of the Austrian troops. The Prussian court intended thereby to flatter the Kaiser, and strengthen the somewhat weakened bonds between the monarchs.¹⁰⁹ The *Ballplatz*, however, saw in the mission merely a trick of Bismarck's to gain more time,¹¹⁰ but both Mensdorff and the Emperor wished to utilize the opportunity to speak their mind to the Prince.¹¹¹ In this they were disappointed, for the latter on his arrival declared bluntly, "I am a military man and nothing more."¹¹² But in the course of the festivities, which resembled those of the earlier Schönbrunn visits, they undoubtedly succeeded in impressing upon the Prince their sincere desire to preserve the alliance in vigor; and they probably went farther in conversation with Count Moltke, who

¹⁰⁷ This entire conversation reported in Chotek to Mensdorff, January 20, No. 6A *Geheim* (See Appendix A, No. 5).

¹⁰⁸ Chotek to Mensdorff, January 21, tg. No. 6.

¹⁰⁹ Chotek to Mensdorff, January 6, letter; Reculet to Drouyn, January 14 (*Origines* V, p. 308 f.).—Sybel and Friedjung make no mention of the mission.

¹¹⁰ Meysenbug's remark (Vogt p. 59).

¹¹¹ Gramont to Drouyn January 9 (*Origines* V, p. 289 f.).

¹¹² Gramont, February 10 (*Ibid.* V, p. 388); Bonar to Russell, January 18, No. 14 (F. O. 7 Austria 682). King William gave the Prince instructions to avoid political conversations, unless the Kaiser took the initiative, in which case the Prince might express his personal views on Prussia's interests in the Duchies (Bismarck to Goltz, January 24, 1865, tg. No. 22: PGS).

accompanied the mission.¹¹³ At least, Moltke returned to Berlin an advocate of a cession of the Hohenzollern Principalities to Austria, for her share of the Duchies.¹¹⁴ And so, while the episode did strengthen the *entente*, the Austrian views lost no ground thereby.

Meanwhile, Mensdorff remained deaf to any other compensation for complete annexation.¹¹⁵ He rather effectually silenced the partition proposal by demanding a treaty of mutual guarantee,¹¹⁶—the one feature of the original Rechberg plan for which Bismarck had little taste.¹¹⁷ Nothing daunted, the Prussian minister continued to advise Austria to keep her share in the Duchies, for it would some day be valuable as a pawn, if not for itself alone.¹¹⁸ And indirectly he kept the money compensation plan also on the carpet,¹¹⁹ for there were indications that it might take hold in certain circles in Austria.¹²⁰

¹¹³ Memor p. 185; Bismarck to Goltz, January 24, 1865, tg No. 22 (PGS), to be used with caution; Mensdorff's remarks in council of January 11, 1865 (Appendix A, No. 4). The words ascribed to the Prince in Jansen-Samwer p. 439, were more likely Moltke's. The general's own letters are non-committal (Moltke: *Gesammelte Schriften und Denkwürdigkeiten* VI, pp. 436, 442). For four days Moltke was in constant contact with the Archdukes and high Austrian military men (Moltke VI, p. 442), many of whom favored a territorial exchange, as did their leader, the Archduke Albrecht (Przibram: *Erinnerungen eines alten Oesterreichers* I, p. 131).

¹¹⁴ *Aus dem Leben Theodor von Bernhardis* V, p. 167.

¹¹⁵ Mensdorff to Chotek, letter c. January 16

¹¹⁶ Werther to Bismarck, January 22 (Jansen-Samwer p. 439).—The same day, to Gramont, Mensdorff elaborately refuted the idea of a guarantee-pact! (*Origines* V, p. 337 f.).

¹¹⁷ For the Rechberg compromise, see above, chapter iii.

¹¹⁸ Bismarck to Werther, January 26 (*G. W. V.*, pp. 66, 69); words to Karolyi, February 8 (*G. W. V.*, p. 80, and Karolyi to Mensdorff, February 9, tg. No. 15); also Thile's words to Karolyi, February 7 (*Ibid.*)

¹¹⁹ Cf. Bismarck's remarks to Benedetti (*Origines* V, p. 311). Hohenthal reported another remark: that the claimants, especially Austria must be bought out (Friesen II, p. 132). To Chotek, Bismarck did not mention money after the chargé's indignant protest of December 29 (See Appendix A, No. 5).

¹²⁰ Several newspapers took up the idea of a money compensation (*Origines* V, p. 290; Friesen II, p. 134) perhaps inspired by Werther or by Plener, Austrian finance minister. Doubtless the riper project of the sale of Lauen-

As Bismarck had foreseen, all these courtesies and this talk of granting Austria compensations had served to put the *Hofburg* in a better humor. Mensdorff, Esterhazy, and the Emperor read with satisfaction, too, the passages of the Prussian King's speech, relating to the settlement of the Duchies question "in harmony with his illustrious ally."¹²¹ Chotek surmised that Bismarck's partition offer was "the last bargaining before submitting to the Augustenburger,"¹²² and that the Prussian conditions would be made known within a week or ten days.¹²³ This latter piece of news caused the greatest excitement in the foreign office.¹²⁴ Karolyi was recalled from his honeymoon to be ready to carry the Austrian reply to Berlin.¹²⁵

All the bitterer was the disillusionment in Vienna, when the burg accounted for many of the rumors: Bonar had reported rumors of its sale for seven million florins, the equivalent of the Austrian war-costs of 1850 (to Russell, December 14, No. 67 Confidential.—F. O. 7 Austria 674), and Reculot heard of a similar offer from Prussia (*Origines* V, p. 53). Gramont's assertion that the sale had been definitely decided upon seems improbable (Vogt p. 53 f.).

¹²¹ Bonar to Russell, January 18, No. 14 (F. O. 7 Austria 682).—Under-secretary von Thile, in pointing out to Chotek the passages relating to the *Bund* and the Duchies went so far as to say, that "a greater difference existed than one might imagine, between the *Bismarckian* personal assertions, and the definitive *royal* Prussian statements on these two important questions!" (Chotek to Mensdorff, January 14 *Vertraulich*).

¹²² Chotek to Mensdorff, January 20, letter.—Chotek also thought that Bismarck was about to "climb down" from his high pretensions, and was preparing the public for such an act! (Chotek to Mensdorff, February 3, letter).

¹²³ Chotek advised Mensdorff to hammer at Bismarck again in a few days, so that he would moderate his conditions (Chotek to Mensdorff, January 20, letter). The advice was followed, and the note which issued from the *Ballplatz* under the impression that Prussia was about to submit the long-awaited program, was a veritable paean of friendship (Mensdorff to Chotek, January 28).

¹²⁴ Mensdorff wrote a very rare marginal on Chotek's telegram announcing the departure of the Prussian notes: "Bis jetzt noch nichts über das Eintreffen der Depeschen hier vernommen."

¹²⁵ He had left Berlin in December to be married in Paris. Sybel and Thimme give the erroneous impression that he was called from Berlin at this time (Sybel IV, p. 41; G. W. V, p. 77).

long-heralded Prussian notes contained not a word of the Prussian demands, but merely attempted to rebut Biegeleben's arguments of December 21, and showed little of the recent appreciation of Austria's interests.¹²⁶ After all these months, after Austria's continual urging, after the personal appeal of the Emperor himself,¹²⁷ Bismarck still dallied with his ally. Every day of delay had placed Franz Joseph in a more embarrassing position in the eyes of Germany and Europe.¹²⁸

Mensdorff did not conceal from Werther his deep disappointment. He could not believe, he said, that so long a delay was unintentional.¹²⁹ Far from being swayed by parliament and press, as Bismarck openly insinuated, the Austrian minister declared:

"that he was determined to give up his portfolio if the Prussian alliance were no longer the cornerstone of Austrian policy"—but his position must be made tenable for him by Prussia. He considered it "a just desire of the Emperor and his colleagues, soon to see clearly for what ultimate purpose Austria had paid with men and blood." The "pawn plan" he dismissed with the remark that, while Bismarck might favor a war prospect for Prussia, Austria's policy was founded on peace.¹³⁰

If the calm Mensdorff was deeply indignant, Biegeleben boiled over with rage. He succeeded in getting the Emperor's approval for the fiery instructions with which Karolyi returned to Berlin on February 4.¹³¹ These instructions ignored the recent Prussian note,

"because its real object was only 'to secure Austria's approval for Prussia's system of procrastination.'" Prussia reckons on European complications, or on making the Duchies ripe for annexation. "Both are in contra-

¹²⁶ Bismarck to Werther, January 26 (*G. W. V.*, pp. 60-66).

¹²⁷ Through Werther, January 19 (*Sybel IV.*, p. 40).

¹²⁸ Cf. Mensdorff's remarks (Gramont to Drouyn, December 29: *Origines V.*, p. 252); Friesen II, p. 112.

¹²⁹ This interview taken from Werther's report to Bismarck, February 1, No. 29 (*HAA*).

¹³⁰ Werther to Bismarck, February 1, No. 29 (*HAA*).

¹³¹ Mensdorff to Karolyi, February 4. The instructions expressed the hope that the envoy would persuade Prussia to offer "more favorable declarations" than the note of January 26.

diction to our interests and the direction of our policy. . . . Austria cannot wait with folded arms, while Prussia, perhaps in three weeks, formulates her 'special advantages' . . . and in as many months communicates the opinion of the crown judges on the succession question." As in the notes of December 21, Karolyi was asked to call attention to the restlessness of the *Mittelstaaten*, and to threaten not only a frank declaration in the Diet, but also the publication of the correspondence with Prussia. Last but not least, "the period of our co-responsibility for the state of things in the Duchies" would come to an end. The instructions closed with a few perfunctory compliments for the Prussian alliance. Austria would show her good will "even if the discussion must again take place between the three parties. Austria, Prussia, and the Diet."—

This was the voice of Biegeleben, almost unmuffled at last. How different the voice of Mensdorff: "There is only one way of *forcing* a termination. . . ," he said to the British charg , "and that is, menace.—But we are not going to menace Prussia and have no reason to do so. We must therefore still carry on the negotiation and hope that we shall in the end arrive at a satisfactory conclusion."¹³²

In reality, the *Mittelstaaten* were pressing Austria for action. Before following Karolyi to Berlin, therefore, we shall examine Mensdorff's relations with Munich and Dresden.

NEGOTIATIONS WITH BAVARIA AND SAXONY

Since his participation in the London Conference of May 1864 as delegate of the German Diet, Baron Beust, the self-assured Saxon premier, had worn upon his shoulders the mantle of leadership of the secondary and small states.¹³³ Stout champion of Augustenburg and of the right of the Diet to settle the fate of the Duchies, he had willingly incurred the anger of Bismarck and even of Rechberg. But at the same time, his energetic attempts to consolidate the forces of the smaller states, and his well-known advocacy of an all-German parliament had attracted the sympathy of Schmerling, whose

¹³² Bonar to Russell, February 2, No. 24 (F. O. 7 Austria 682).

¹³³ On Beust's career in general, see his memoirs: *Aus drei Vierteljahrhundert*; F. W. Ebeling: *Friedrich Ferdinand Graf von Beust*, not always reliable; B. Erdmannsd rfer's biographical sketch in the *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie* XLVI, pp. 494-532 is very well done.

plans in these respects ran parallel to Beust's. Confidential relations had been established. Both ministers had begun a press-campaign on behalf of an Austro-French alliance to resist the Prussian "land-lust" and to preserve the threatened independence of the German states.

Mensdorff's appointment proved a blow to these projects.¹³⁴ Austria failed to back up Beust against Bismarck in the affair of the federal troops, and the Diet suffered its worst humiliation.¹³⁵ With incurable optimism, the Saxon premier began his labors anew,¹³⁶ and Fate soon presented him with a staunch ally in the person of the newly appointed Bavarian minister-president, Freiherr von der Pfordten.

Baron Pfordten was counted the most vigorous protagonist for Augustenburg in the Diet.¹³⁷ Having wound up his five years' term as Bavarian envoy in Frankfurt with a spirited salvo against the recent Vienna treaty,¹³⁸ he was expected to engineer an energetic resistance to Prussian pretensions.¹³⁹ At heart, he was just as bitterly hostile to Austria, for whose policy he had a long-standing mistrust.¹⁴⁰ For years, Pfordten's guiding principle had been to utilize the rivalry of Prussia and Austria to raise the position of Bavaria. A man whose quick temper and weak heart caused him much physical suffering, Freiherr von der Pfordten fell short of his Saxon friend

¹³⁴ Mensdorff failed to ratify Schmerling's understanding with Beust (*Origines* V, p. 159); Beust's disappointment (*Ibid.* V, p. 62); Mensdorff's reserve frightened the *Mittelstaaten* (*Ibid.* V, p. 136).

¹³⁵ Mensdorff later disclaimed personal responsibility for Austria's back-down (words to Edelsheim: *G. W. V.*, p. 131).

¹³⁶ Beust empowered Vitzthum to sound Drouyn on a close defensive alliance between France and Austria (Vitzthum p. 52 ff.).

¹³⁷ T. Loskarn: *Bayern und die schleswig-holsteinische Frage 1836/64, passim*. On special phases of Pfordten's political career, see M. Doeberl: *Bayern und das preussische Unionsprojekt* (Munich 1925) with a character sketch on p. 11 ff.; K. A. von Müller: *Bayern im Jahre 1866*, with a similar sketch on p. 12 ff., and extensive bibliography. Wippermann's article in the *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie* is not free from errors.

¹³⁸ His vote on December 5 in the Diet (*Staatsarchiv* VII, p. 344 ff.).

¹³⁹ Beust's hopes (*Origines* V, p. 162); King William feared the effects of Pfordten's appointment (letter to Franz Joseph, November 2, 1864).

¹⁴⁰ Müller p. 14.

in two respects: he rode more obstinately "the lame professorial hobby of abstract theories,"¹⁴¹ and he lacked the sense of humor and objectivity which might have tempered his "boundless conceit." Fully acquainted with Pfordten's weaknesses, Beust tactfully surrendered the public leadership to him, content to furnish most of the ideas for the tandem.¹⁴²

At Bamberg between December 21 and 23, the two ardent knights concerted a plan to draw the fangs of the Prussian dragon. They hoped to group around them many enthusiastic adherents from the ranks of the secondary and small states, and thereby to attract the assistance of Austria. They projected periodical conferences of ministers, common military arrangements, cooperative action in the Diet, an all-German parliament, and an action to force Prussia to bring the Duchies question to Frankfurt.¹⁴³ Beust composed a resolution to be introduced in the Diet, requesting Austria and Prussia to confer Schleswig-Holstein upon the Prince of Augustenburg, and to make known their decision as to Lauenburg.¹⁴⁴ Pfordten would have preferred to assert the "right" of the Diet to decide the whole problem itself,¹⁴⁵ but refrained in order to enable Austria to support the resolution.¹⁴⁶ What success Beust hoped for from such an act, unless backed up by force, we do not know. But the Bavarian minister confidently expected that it would stir up the Prussian population to compel Bismarck to go to Canossa.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴¹ Blome to Mensdorff, letter, December 8, 1864. Pfordten had been a professor of law at Leipzig, before entering politics.

¹⁴² Beust was content to be a "simple lieutenant." (*Origines* V, p. 236 ff.).

¹⁴³ For this Bamberg conference: *Origines* V, pp. 235 ff., 242, 246, 299; Dalwigk: *Tagebücher* p. 154. Ebeling II, p. 269 is full of errors.

¹⁴⁴ Beust's authorship: Pfordten to Bray, March 11, 1865 (copy in HHS); confirmed by Beust (*Origines* VI, p. 101). This resolution was later presented in Frankfurt without change of wording (*Origines* VI, p. 101; Sybel IV, p. 70 note 1). It is printed in *Staatsarchiv* VIII, p. 345 ff.—Dalwigk claimed a share in its completion (*Origines* VI, p. 39).

¹⁴⁵ Pfordten to Bray, December 15, 1864 (copy in HHS).

¹⁴⁶ So Pfordten told Blome (Blome to Mensdorff, February 7, No. 12A). Pfordten indicated that Beust, too, wished a weaker statement than he (Pfordten) would have liked.

¹⁴⁷ Blome to Mensdorff, February 21, No. 15.

Full of hope, Pfordten set out upon the grand tour to revive the "Trias" faith. He had no trouble in interesting the ministers of Nassau and Hesse-Darmstadt. Baron Dalwigk in fact "for years had desired and demanded" the very blessings now in view,¹⁴⁸ and on Pfordten's invitation, agreed to join in presenting the resolution before the Diet. But in Karlsruhe and Stuttgart the knight-errant met his first resistance. Baden had long been the "black sheep" of South Germany. Grand Duke Frederick I, nephew of the King of Prussia, and Freiherr von Roggenbach, his premier, though supporters of Augustenburg, were also inclined to favor Prussia's claim to a stronger position in the Confederation. They were not, however, in sympathy with Bismarckism, but strove to mediate between Prussia and the smaller states.¹⁴⁹ The Court of Würtemberg, too, was at this time more favorable to Prussia than to Austria. While the King himself was fairly neutral, his influential Queen, the daughter of the Tsar of Russia, and the new premier, Baron Varnhüler, were personally inclined toward Prussia.¹⁵⁰ Under these circumstances, both Baden and Würtemberg declined to be drawn into any direct action against Prussia.¹⁵¹ The smaller states, which Pfordten sounded by letter,¹⁵² were divided pro and con. Hanover—"lost" to

¹⁴⁸ Dalwigk: *Tagebücher* p. 154.—The conference took place at Frankfurt, December 24.—Reculot's account of a conference at Heppenheim, which Varnhüler also attended, is probably fanciful (*Origines* V, p. 242 ff.).

¹⁴⁹ For the policy of the Grand Duke and Roggenbach, see Oncken: *Grossherzog Friedrich I. von Baden und die deutsche Politik* I.

¹⁵⁰ Sybel IV, p. 39. There is no documented study of Würtemberg policy during these years. The best sketch is E. Mack: *König Karl I. von Würtemberg und die deutsche Frage*. The standard study of public opinion in the kingdom is A. Rapp: *Die Württemberger und die nationale Frage 1803-1871*.

¹⁵¹ Pfordten to Bray, March 11, 1865 (copy in HHS).—Pfordten went to Stuttgart to see Varnhüler (*Origines* V, p. 261 f.; Friesen II, p. 118), but he met Roggenbach in Frankfurt. Roggenbach urged him "nichts gegen die intentionen der beiden Grossmächte anregen zu wollen. Der K. baierischer Herr Minister habe ihm auch über diesen Punkt befriedigende Zusicherungen gemacht u. überdies versprochen, dass, was er auch tun werde, nicht ohne vorgängiges Einvernehmen mit dem hiesiges Cabinet geschehen solle." (Pilat to Mensdorff, Karlsruhe, December 31, 1864, No. 37).

¹⁵² *Origines* V, p. 245.

Prussia—was not even approached,¹⁵³ and Hesse-Cassel's stubborn Elector refused to enter the lists against Berlin.¹⁵⁴ The net result of Pfordten's Christmas activities was so disappointing that the crusaders gave up more than half of their program, for the time being, and determined to concentrate on the Augustenburg resolution.

But what of Austria? Freiherr von der Pfordten, a week after coming into office, had characteristically opened an exchange of official notes with the Vienna government, as one great power to another! In the first note, he maintained that the *Bund* had not only the *right* but the *duty* to confer the sovereignty of Schleswig-Holstein upon the Prince of its choice. He favored Augustenburg for the position. Finally, he offered to follow Austria's lead in any attempt to revive the prestige of the sorely shaken Diet,—and he indicated that others would do likewise.¹⁵⁵ To Count Blome, the Austrian envoy, he confided that the *Mittelstaaten* might be driven into the Prussian camp, if Austria denied them support. Blome countered, that opposition might drive Prussia into the arms of France, whereupon Pfordten calmed the envoy as to his intentions—he would not raise the question of the rights of the Diet in the near future.¹⁵⁶

The Vienna statesmen were not ungrateful for Pfordten's overture. They thought it unwise to spurn an offer which might eventually prove useful, but they would not tolerate any meddling in their negotiations with Prussia. Consequently Mensdorff, who had already initiated Count Bray, the Bavar-

¹⁵³ *Origines* V, p. 237. King George V, and Count Platen abhorred the democratic connections of Augustenburg, and strongly supported their neighbor, the Grand Duke of Oldenburg (Vitzthum p. 37 f.; Hassell II-2, p. 178 f.). They were suspected of designs upon the territory of Oldenburg (Dalwigk p. 153). Platen told the Austrian envoy, Count Ingelheim, that he preferred Prussian annexation of the Duchies to their vassalization,—but Oldenburg above all other solutions (Ingelheim to Mensdorff, December 30, 1864).

¹⁵⁴ *Origines* V, p. 246.

¹⁵⁵ Pfordten to Bray, December 13, 1864 (copy in HHS).

¹⁵⁶ Interview of December 15 (Blome to Mensdorff, December 16, 1864, No. 131A).

ian envoy, into the secret of the correspondence with Prussia, replied to Munich as follows:

Although Austria could not agree with all of Baron Pfordten's arguments (viz. the rights of the Diet), Austrian *aims* were in accord with his. But Pfordten must let Austria choose the means of attaining those aims. Later on, Bavaria might use her "great influence" to support Austria in exerting pressure in Berlin.¹⁵⁷

A similar message to Beust carried also a gentle chiding. The talented Saxon foresaw that sooner or later Bismarck would launch a German parliament to rally the nation around him, and he warned Vienna to forestall this move.¹⁵⁸ But the advice only angered the *Hofburg*, and drew down "regrets" at the "rumor" that a parliament was being considered.¹⁵⁹

Disappointed at Austria's response, both premiers agreed nevertheless to refrain from interference for the present.¹⁶⁰ But Pfordten set a time limit. If the question were not settled between Prussia and Austria when the Bavarian chambers met in the spring, he (Pfordten) would introduce a resolution of his own in the Diet.¹⁶¹ Bavaria, he exclaimed, would never permit Prussia to annex the Duchies,—Prussian aggression should be met by more than a mere protest.¹⁶² Such brave declarations, however, lost some of their attraction in the eyes of the Austrians shortly after, when Blome reported certain quite different utterances of the Baron, viz. that in Bismarck's

¹⁵⁷ Mensdorff to Blome, January 2, 1865. Blome was not instructed to return Pfordten's courtesy by leaving a copy of the Austrian note, a tactless omission which the sensitive man was quick to notice.

¹⁵⁸ *Origines* V, p. 299.

¹⁵⁹ Such a measure would be "disastrous," Mensdorff wrote (to Werner, January 7).—Again on January 24, Mensdorff tried to calm Beust's ardor. He hoped that he would not have to use "dubious" Frankfurt pressure (Mensdorff to Werner, January 24).

¹⁶⁰ Blome to Mensdorff, January 3, No. 2; Pfordten to Bray, January 6 (copy in HHS).

¹⁶¹ Blome to Mensdorff, January 3, No. 2; January 7, No. 5A. Cf. Sybel IV, p. 40.

¹⁶² Blome to Mensdorff, January 7, No. 5A.

place, he would act as Bismarck was doing.¹⁶³ His tolerance for Prussia's ambition for North-German hegemony, his seeming indifference to the dissolution of the *Bund*, and his own ambition to form a Southwest-German group with a common parliament, could not but shake the seismographs in the Austrian capital.¹⁶⁴ Thus at the very beginning of his ministry, Pfordten gave evidence of the contradictions and unreliability with which he was later to drive the Austrian statesmen almost to distraction.

Meanwhile the exchange of notes between Vienna and Munich continued regularly,¹⁶⁵ and the relations between the two governments might have remained undisturbed for weeks had an Austrian blunder not forced the Saxon and Bavarian knights to hoist their standard more publicly.

About the middle of January, several leading newspapers suddenly published excerpts from Austrian official documents: a resumé of one of Blome's despatches, giving words of Baron

¹⁶³ "Austria will have to answer the question whether she will not allow to Prussia greater freedom in the north. Prussia needs to develop her forces, and if he (Pfordten) were . . . Prussian minister, he would probably seek it in territorial expansion and hardly act otherwise than the leaders in Berlin are doing. . . ." (Blome to Mensdorff, January 11, No. 6).

¹⁶⁴ "Bavaria will not provoke the dissolution of the *Bund*," Pfordten told Blome, "but if Prussia does, and Austria lets her do it, very well. Bavaria is not worried. Prussia would gradually absorb the entire north; Bavaria would constitute an independent Southwest-Germany with the states that will probably ally with her for that purpose, and he, Baron Pfordten . . . would begin by calling a Southwest-German Parliament." (Blome to Mensdorff, January 11, No. 6). Pfordten broached similar ideas to the Prussian envoy, Prince Reuss, in March (*G. W. V.*, p. 115). Cf. also, *Stern* IX, p. 587 f.

¹⁶⁵ In a note of January 6, Pfordten remarked that Mensdorff had failed to mention what candidate Austria preferred. He hoped that the powers would admit the *Bund* to a share in the final solution, but he agreed to remain passive for the present. Mensdorff replied on January 14: There could be no doubt what solution Austria preferred. If Austria could not solve the question *with* Prussia, she would not give up her freedom as the presiding power in the Diet! This crossed with another Bavarian note, to which Mensdorff replied on January 21, thanking Pfordten for his tactful stand.—The Bavarian notes were presented in copy to Mensdorff,—the Austrian notes merely read to Pfordten, but no copy left.

Pfordten, passages from the Prussian and Austrian notes of December 13 and 21, and a Prussian despatch of January 12, complaining of the political clubs of the Duchies.¹⁶⁶ This sheaf of confidences was released probably at the instigation of Schmerling with the intention of placing Austria's case in a better light in contrast to Prussia's.¹⁶⁷ Metternich contributed to the disclosures, without Mensdorff's knowledge.¹⁶⁸ But the effect was the opposite of that expected.¹⁶⁹ That Prussia had demanded annexation, surprised the *Mittelstaaten* less than that Austria had declared her readiness to grant it in return for an equal compensation. A cry of rage and disillusionment arose throughout the German chancelleries.¹⁷⁰ Very few were reassured by the Austrian defense, that the demand for land compensation was solely intended to check Prussia's land hunger.¹⁷¹ Pfordten was taken to task for his passivity toward Schleswig-Holstein. Fearing the repercussions in the Bavarian parliament, set for early April, he was forced to show some activity.¹⁷² Beust also was becoming impatient.¹⁷³ Both knew now, if not before, that Austria was ready to throw the Hereditary Prince overboard if Prussia would pay Austria's price.¹⁷⁴ The *Ballplatz* had its own grievance against Beust, not only for his parliament project, but because of certain coquetry with

¹⁶⁶ Sybel IV, p. 40; Friesen II, p. 113 f.; G. W. V, p. 58; Chotek to Mensdorff, January 21, tg. No. 6; Blome to Mensdorff, January 28, No. 10.

¹⁶⁷ See his words in council of January 11 (Appendix A, No. 4). Cf. Mensdorff's remarks to Werther (Sybel IV, p. 40).

¹⁶⁸ Metternich to Mensdorff, January 31, tg. No. 9.

¹⁶⁹ Goltz wrote that Metternich's communications did more harm than good to Austria in Paris (G. W. V, p. 58 f.).

¹⁷⁰ Blome to Mensdorff, January 15, No. 7; Chotek to Mensdorff, January 21, tg. No. 6; *Origines* V, pp. 327, 331, 334; Vogt p. 51 f.; Friesen II, p. 115.

¹⁷¹ This version was broadcast in the *Allgemeine Zeitung* (January 15) the official *General-korrespondenz* (Friesen II, p. 113), and elsewhere.

¹⁷² Blome to Mensdorff, January 28, No. 10. Blome reported that the press-indiscretions had made a painful impression on Pfordten (January 15, No. 7), and that the Premier had announced in the (official) *Bayerische Zeitung*, his intention to present a resolution for Austria's approval (January 26, No. 9).

¹⁷³ Werner to Mensdorff, January 21, No. 10.

¹⁷⁴ Their bitterness at Austria (*Origines* V, p. 360).

France which came to light in January.¹⁷⁵ So much the more did they smile upon Baron Pfordten for his resistance to the Saxon-French intrigue.¹⁷⁶ At this moment Franz Joseph and his advisers were indignant at Bismarck's interminable procrastination. The situation was therefore ripe for Pfordten's *démarche*, and his despatch of the Bavarian draft-resolution to Vienna on January 26 opens the second stage of his crusade.

The Austrian statesmen must have experienced mingled feelings when they first set eyes upon this document.¹⁷⁷ Though tactfully worded, its outright mention of Augustenburg must have cheered Biegeleben, if it caused Mensdorff and the Emperor to arch their brows. It was clear, however, that Pfordten had weakened the Bavarian point of view, for nowhere was the right claimed for the Diet to *settle* the Duchies question. In an accompanying note, he acknowledged his dependence upon Austrian support, and inquired whether he should present the resolution alone or with Saxony and Hesse-Darmstadt.¹⁷⁸

Still unwilling to side with the *Mittelstaaten* until certain that Prussia's conditions could not be met, Mensdorff temporized and wisely spun out a discussion with Munich. He deemed it preferable that Bavaria alone should introduce the resolution in the Diet, and he did not entirely agree with Pfordten on the competence of the Diet.¹⁷⁹ To satisfy this latter objection, Blome suggested a small change in wording.¹⁸⁰ The ensuing exchange of official notes occupied several weeks,¹⁸¹

¹⁷⁵ Beust's *démarche*: hints to Forth-Rouen (*Origines* V, pp. 203, 305); Vitzthum's mission to Paris (see above). Drouyn's note to Munich and Dresden, January 7 (*Origines* V, p. 284 ff.).

¹⁷⁶ Pfordten was anxious to correct the impression that he had encouraged France. Blome assured him of Austria's confidence. Pfordten expressed some distrust of Beust (Blome to Mensdorff, January 31, No. 11B).

¹⁷⁷ Pfordten to Bray, January 26 (copy in HHS), printed in *Staatsarchiv* VIII, p. 345 ff.

¹⁷⁸ Blome to Mensdorff, January 31, No. 11A.

¹⁷⁹ Mensdorff to Blome, February 4, No. 12A.

¹⁸⁰ Blome to Mensdorff, February 7, No. 12A.

¹⁸¹ Austrian note, February 4: Mensdorff expressed the hope that Prussia would be brought to terms. He would therefore not pass judgment on the

in the course of which Pfordten agreed to postpone further action until Prussia had presented her conditions,¹⁸² and then to consult Austria as to the proper time for the great *pronunciamento*.¹⁸³

"Pfordten is now as gentle and confident as a dove," wrote Blome in mid-February.¹⁸⁴ "For one thing, he knows very well that without us he is powerless; then too, we have struck the right note to put him in a good humor: frequent communications, flattering expressions, and theoretical legal deductions. The former show him that he is respected in Vienna, the latter provide endless delight for his professorial nature. . . ."

In the meantime, Beust had been studiously neglected. Toward the end of February, however, Mensdorff tactfully asked him,

"whether he was not also of the opinion that Saxony would draw more votes along with her if she reserved herself for the voting rather than to step forward at the beginning. . . ." ¹⁸⁵

Beust proved tractable: he did not care how the motion was presented, so long as it was supported by Austria. He was impatient for action. The *Bund* must show signs of life, he said to Baron Werner. The present moment was most propitious, because public opinion was now aroused against Prussia.¹⁸⁶ This admonition was no longer needed in Vienna, for an event had occurred which induced the *Ballplatz* to look with a more sympathetic eye upon the "infinitely little" states. That event was the long-awaited arrival of the special conditions under which King William of Prussia would consent to the formation of an "independent" Schleswig-Holstein.

draft-resolution until later, if negotiations failed. He pointed out Austria's divergent views on the competence of the Diet—Bavarian note, February 8: Pfordten asked on what points specifically Austria disagreed with him, so that complete agreement might be reached.—Austrian note, February 15: Mensdorff presented Austria's views on the succession question at length, and announced that he expected Prussia's conditions in ten days.—Bavarian note, February 19: a long academic discussion of the succession question.—Austrian note, March 6; see below, chapter vi.

¹⁸² Blome to Mensdorff, February 16, No. 13A.

¹⁸³ Provided that the delay was not excessive (Pfordten to Bray, February 8.—Copy in HHS).

¹⁸⁴ Blome to Mensdorff, letter of February 19.

¹⁸⁵ Mensdorff to Werner, February 27, *Vertraulich*.

¹⁸⁶ Werner to Mensdorff, March 1, No. 23.

CHAPTER VI

AUSTRIA CHANGES HER TACTICS

ARMED with Biegeleben's barbed instructions of February 4, Count Karolyi had returned to Berlin, to beard Bismarck, the procrastinator.¹ Their first encounter took place four days later.² Though the envoy held himself well in check, the thrusts of his Vienna-forged rapier, far from awing his opponent, only stung Bismarck to hot retorts.

"When the Prussian people comprehend that Prussia's just demands are disregarded," he roared, "they will claim them with weapons in their hands. The matter had better not be forced to a head, nor the Prussian national feeling aroused with Bavarian resolutions."³

Karolyi withdrew with dignity, but defeated, and wrote to Mensdorff that Prussia would not alter the procrastination program by one hair's breadth.⁴ Austria could do nothing but fold her hands and wait.

Two weeks later, Bismarck finally condescended to reveal the Prussian conditions, which he represented as a "concession" to Austria's wishes, since otherwise Prussia would sooner or later obtain annexation.⁵ Their astonishing magnitude was calculated to make them unacceptable to Duke Frederick⁶

¹ The "barbs" were the impending action of the *Mittelstaaten*, the threat to publish the correspondence on Schleswig-Holstein, and the consequent isolation of Prussia.

² This long interview, reported by Bismarck (*G. W. V.*, p. 77 ff, touched up by Sybel IV, p. 41 ff.), and by Karolyi (to Mensdorff, February 9, tg. No. 15, February 11, dispatch No. 9A)

³ *G. W. V.*, p. 79.

⁴ Karolyi to Mensdorff, February 11, No. 9A.

⁵ Karolyi to Mensdorff, February 25, No. 11A.

⁶ So Bismarck told the Prussian *Kronprinz* on June 18 (letter of the *Kronprinz* to Bismarck, July 17, 1865. Cf. R. Haym. *Das Leben Max Dunckers* [Leipzig 1891] p. 363).

and to Austria.⁷ The almost complete amalgamation of army and navy with those of Prussia, the right to control the recruiting of soldiers and sailors in the Duchies, the duty of these forces to swear obedience to King William,⁸—all these provisions were vital delegations of sovereignty to Prussia. "They are without precedent in all history," exclaimed the usually calm Mensdorff.⁹ Franz Joseph found the conditions "quite unacceptable."¹⁰ He objected especially to the entire set of provisions regarding army and navy. The cession of territory at several points seemed to him unnecessary, and he questioned the amalgamation of the postal and telegraph systems of the Duchies with those of Prussia. The only point that he approved unconditionally was the adherence of the new state to the *Zollverein*. Biegeleben was of course emphatic in denunciation,¹¹ but even Count Esterhazy declared that the acceptance of these conditions would be a "humiliation" which Austria could not undergo.¹²—A week later they were formally rejected.¹³

Bismarck was merry. "Austria will not accept.—Very well. *Wir können warten*," he said, turning Schmerling's fam-

⁷ Bismarck had asked Roon, the war minister, to formulate a military convention "which would go beyond previous military conventions, like that with Saxe-Coburg-Gotha, and would completely secure a firmer and closer adhesion of Schleswig-Holstein to Prussia. . . ." (Bismarck to Roon, December 9, 1864.—*G. W. V.*, p. 96) Since Austria had never recognized the validity of the Coburg convention, holding that it infringed the federal laws, Bismarck could be sure that his more extreme suggestion would be rejected.

⁸ The King himself originated this demand (*Aus dem Leben Theodor von Bernhard's* VI, p. 203).

⁹ "Es gäbe keinen Präcedenzfall in der Geschichte dafür." (Werther to Bismarck, February 27, No 57, HAA). See also Mensdorff's penetrating remark to Wydenbrug (Jansen-Samwer p 444).

¹⁰ The Emperor told Werther that he had not been able to suppress his astonishment at them. With the best will toward an understanding, he regretted that the conditions were "ganz unannehmbar." (See Appendix A, No. 6).

¹¹ See his oft-quoted remark in Jansen-Samwer p. 444.

¹² See Appendix A, No. 6.

¹³ Mensdorff to Karolyi, March 5.

ous phrase to his own uses.¹⁴ Had Austria accepted the demands, Bismarck knew that his annexation policy would have suffered a check. Now he could confront the King with the fact that Austria would *not* grant Prussia's "just" demands unless "one were ready for war and determined upon war."¹⁵ Significantly, Roon called at this moment for a report of the strength of the Austrian army,¹⁶ and speeded up the activity of the Prussian arsenals.¹⁷

But the minister-president did not want "a premature and inappropriate rupture" with Austria.¹⁸ William would not be a convinced annexationist until Augustenburg had been legally and politically demolished. More time must be left for sentiment in the Duchies to veer to Prussia. Bismarck could wait.

For Austrian plans also, the rejection of the February demands was an important turning point. Austria gave up her attempts to press Prussia for a speedy solution. Outwardly she accepted the *provisorium*. But she determined to exercise strong *indirect* pressure in two ways: to support an Augustenburg resolution in the Diet, and to fight the Prussianization of the Duchies,¹⁹ measures which had been foreshadowed as early as December.²⁰ In this way the *Ballplatz* expected to rally against Prussia as much popular feeling as possible in Germany and the Duchies. The Bavarian resolution would give the Augustenburg movement new courage, and Prussia would no longer feel comfortable nor hopeful in her copartner-

¹⁴ So Hohenthal reported to Beust (Werner to Mensdorff, March 8, No. 25). Bismarck insisted that Austria had "pur et simple abgelehnt" (Hassell: *Hannover* II, Heft 2, p. 241).

¹⁵ So Bismarck told Roggenbach (Oncken: *Grossherzog Friedrich I. von Baden* I, p. 504).

¹⁶ Sybel IV, p. 48.

¹⁷ Clermont-Tonnerre, March 28 (*Origines* VI, p. 99).

¹⁸ Bismarck to Goltz, February 6, 1865 (*G. W. V.*, p. 75). Cf. Bismarck's letter to William, August 1, 1865 (*Anhang* I, p. 120).

¹⁹ Blome to Mensdorff, August 14, 1865, No. 2 (Appendix A, No. 9).

²⁰ Cf. Mensdorff to Karolyi, February 4.

ship in the North.²¹ As a result, the *Ballplatz* hoped Bismarck would eventually modify his demands, or offer more acceptable compensations to Austria.²²

By March 4, the Vienna government was ready to put the new policy into effect on three fronts: in Berlin, in the Duchies, and in the chancelleries of the *Mittelstaaten*. Accordingly, full instructions were despatched to Karolyi, to Baron Halbhüser in Schleswig, and to Count Blome in Munich. Meanwhile the ostensible official attitude was: no change in policy,—maintenance of the Prussian alliance in spite of temporary misunderstandings.²³ The Prussian military attaché could telegraph his chief that the Austrian army was being reduced.²⁴ In diplomatic relations, insistence gave way to resignation, and curtness to calmness in so short a time as to cast suspicion on the sincerity of the new friendliness.

The Austrian reply to the Prussian February note borrowed Bismarck's usual tone of grieved loyalty.²⁵ A parallel instruction for Karolyi's personal attention might have been written by Franz Joseph himself, so closely did it express the monarch's feelings:

²¹ Mensdorff's remark to Edelsheim (Flemming to Bismarck, March 12, 1865.—Copy in AGEV).

²² Mensdorff to Metternich and Apponyi, March 9, No. 4. Mensdorff told the British chargé, that "he could not believe that Prussia had said her last word—and indeed Baron Werther had already shown signs to that effect." (Bonar to Russell, March 2, No. 39 Confidential.—F. O. 7 Austria 682).

²³ Mensdorff to Metternich and Apponyi, March 31, No. 1.

²⁴ Count Groeben gave figures (Werther to Bismarck, March 5, tg. No. 69 *Geheim*, AGEV).

²⁵ The Austrian note is summarized in Sybel IV, p. 47, but important passages have been disregarded. Thanks to Franz Joseph, the note left a loophole for further negotiations (*Origines* VI, p. 21; Stern IX, p. 402). Austria accepted four conditions: Rendsburg to be a federal fortress; Kiel a federal naval station; Prussia to construct the canal; and the Duchies to enter the *Zollverein*.—Moreover, Mensdorff said to Werther: "Er habe übrigens in vertraulicher Depesche und Privatbrief . . . den Grafen Karolyi angewiesen, bei uns jede Neigung auf einer anderen Basis zu verhandeln, in der Kenntniss der hiesigen Auffassungen mit Bereitwilligkeit aufzugreifen, doch sehe er ein, dass für den Augenblick in den Verhandlungen Stillstand eingetreten, und der status quo in den Herzogthümern fort dauern würde." (Werther to Bismarck, March 6, No. 72. HAA).

" . . . Say to Herr von Bismarck most urgently, that through his present policy he is seriously and immediately endangering the great purpose of protecting the peace of Europe and the interests of legitimacy in the alliance of the two German powers . . . For instance . . . do they in Berlin feel entirely sure that that same France, which unselfishly and without compensation may have offered the Elbe Duchies to the Prussian monarchy, would not at the next uprising in Poland declare that Prussia could now get along without the Polish provinces? . . . Let them recognize in good time, that Prussia will be able to enjoy, in honor and security within the great Central-European defensive position, the advantages that we are ready to concede — though less than they wish — while through the annexation policy Prussia even against its will must fall in with the Franco-Neo-Italian kinship."²⁶

Of less friendly intent, but no less justifiable from the Austrian point of view, were the new orders for the Austrian commissioner in the Duchies.

THE COUNTER-ATTACK IN THE DUCHIES

Baron Halbhuber was the third in the succession of Austrian co-regents to witness the propaganda-war between the forces of Augustenburg and those of Prussia on the lower Elbe. In the winter of 1863-64 when the Prince of Augustenburg had taken Holstein by storm, as he had the rest of Germany, political clubs and Augustenburg associations spread like wildfire, chiefly among liberal circles in the cities.²⁷ Only the aristocratic landholders as a class held aloof. Horrified at this "democratic" outburst, Rechberg had desired to expel the Hereditary Prince from the Duchies. But in May 1864, even Bismarck had encouraged this popular movement, for its battle-cry was "*los von Dänemark*."

The Duchy of Schleswig, however, had had a different fate. Taken over exclusively by Prussia and Austria as the Danes retreated, the sole masters were the Prussian and Austrian commissioners, Baron Zedlitz and Count Revertera.²⁸ From

²⁶ Mensdorff to Karolyi, March 5, No. 2 *Reservirt*.

²⁷ Sybel's account (IV pp. 61-66) is accurate as to facts, but he distorts Prussian and Austrian motives in his usual manner.

²⁸ Revertera: "Rechberg und Bismarck, 1863 bis 1864," in *Deutsche Revue* XXVIII, 1903, Heft 4, p. 5 ff.

the first, Bismarck treated Schleswig as a province of Prussia, and the Augustenburg influence was excluded. Zedlitz seized the mail and telegraph system, filled important offices with Prussian officials, gained control of the police, and held the reins in his own hand. His Austrian colleague could not so easily draw officials from far-away Austria, nor did Count Rechberg care to raise difficulties during the war. Revertera's successor, Baron Lederer, found himself equally helpless.

When, in December 1864, the forced retreat of the federal troops and the federal *Commissars* from Holstein and Lauenburg left the southern lands also in the hands of Austria and Prussia, the administration of the three Duchies was united, and Bismarck saw his opportunity to subjugate the newer acquisitions as he had Schleswig. He had earlier laid hold upon the postal and telegraph services of Holstein and Lauenburg.²⁹ By agreement between the allies, Austria retained only the Kalik brigade of 4800 men,³⁰ stationed in western Schleswig, whereas 16,000 Prussians, spread through both Duchies, were a great potential machine for annexation sentiment.³¹ To stifle the hope of a merely temporary occupation in the breasts of the inhabitants, Bismarck openly encouraged the Prussian officers to move their families to the Duchies.³² Baron Zedlitz established himself regally, and in noticeable contrast to the customary Prussian frugality, gave frequent and elaborate state-dinners.³³

During the winter of 1864-65 a fairly efficient propaganda

²⁹ Stern IX, p. 400; Halbhuber to Mensdorff, January 13, 1865, No. 2. Both services were headed by Prussians, but Halbhuber prevented the dismissal of many native officials (Halbhuber to Mensdorff, February 15, No. 24).

³⁰ Under the Prussian commanding general, Herwarth von Bittenfeld.

³¹ The tactlessness of General Herwarth went far to neutralize this influence. Mensdorff protested against his arrests of citizens and Bismarck called him gently to account (*G. W. V.*, p. 152 ff.). He wanted to recall the general, but could not secure the King's assent till June.

³² *Origines* V, p. 185.

³³ Halbhuber to Mensdorff, February 15, No. 24.

machine was organized by Bismarck.³⁴ His most able assistant was the Schleswig-Holsteiner, Baron Scheel-Plessen, who had offered his services to Bismarck at Schönbrunn, in August 1864, for the cause of Prussian annexation.³⁵ Bismarck was so impressed with his ability that he wished to make him a third *Commissar* beside Zedlitz and Lederer, or failing that, to place him at the head of the civil departments of the Duchies (*Landesregierung*).³⁶ When that attempt failed, Bismarck promised Scheel-Plessen a high position eventually in Prussia.³⁷ This restless personality began his activity by drafting an adroitly worded petition to the sovereigns of Austria and Prussia to permit the Duchies to join the latter state. Before seeking signatures, Scheel-Plessen sent his draft to Bismarck for approval of the form, contents, and time of presentation.³⁸ This was quickly given, and Bismarck kept an eye on the progress of the petition.³⁹ When seventeen prominent men had been induced to sign, it was presented in Berlin and Vienna late in December. King William received it warmly, and publicly approved its ideas.⁴⁰ But Mensdorff refused to deliver the document to the Emperor on the ground that it was not in proper form, and because of the prohibition of political manifestations during the provisional regime in the Duchies.⁴¹

Meanwhile, these lands were being flooded with pamphlets ruthlessly attacking the Hereditary Prince, and agitators were spreading the gospel of the blessings of Prussian rule.⁴² At

³⁴ On this subject, Sybel is silent. Jansen-Samwer gives some data, pp. 432, 434 which are repeated by Stern IX, p. 400. So far as I am aware, the present account is the first to be based on Prussian and Austrian official documents.

³⁵ *G. W. X.*, p. 292.

³⁶ Bismarck to Richthofen, December 16, 1864, No. 84 (PGS).

³⁷ Scheel-Plessen to Bismarck, letter of February 19, 1865 (HAA).

³⁸ Richthofen to Bismarck, December 1, 1864, No. 109 *Durchaus vertraulich und geheim* (PGS).

³⁹ Bismarck to Richthofen, December 13, No. 80 *Ganz vertraulich* (PGS).

⁴⁰ Jansen-Samwer p. 431.

⁴¹ Mensdorff to Lederer, December 27.

⁴² Jansen-Samwer p. 432.

least two of the new propagandists came from Baron Zedlitz' *entourage*.⁴³ But these activities were carried on largely through natives,⁴⁴ encouraged and seemingly financed in part by the *Wilhelmstrasse*.⁴⁵

Bismarck's envoy in Hamburg, Freiherr von Richthofen, more astute than Zedlitz, functioned as *liaison* officer with Scheel-Plessen, and with the important Hamburg newspapers. These organs were more widely read in the Duchies than the smaller local papers, and Prussia controlled already at least two of them.⁴⁶ By April, the Austrian envoy could state, that, with the exception of a few less important journals, "the entire press in the Duchies as well as the Hansa cities is in the pay

⁴³ "Ausser dem, dem Baron Zedlitz zugetheilten Prinzen Hohenlohe, welcher angeblich die Verfassungsverhältnisse Schleswig-Holsteins zu studieren hat, ist bereits seit mehreren Monaten der preussische Landrat ausser Dienst Lavergne de Peguillen hier anwesend und unternimmt öfter Bereisungen des Landes, seiner Angabe nach zum Zwecke social-politischer Studien, in der Tat aber als Commis-voyageur des Ministeriums Bismarck" (Halbhuber to Mensdorff, February 15, No. 24). Peguillen's reports are filed in HAA On Hohenlohe's political activities, see Tiedemann: *Aus sieben Jahrzehnten* I, p. 434, and Jansen-Samwer pp. 475-476.

⁴⁴ Keudell: *Fürst und Fürstin Bismarck* pp. 191-192.

⁴⁵ Letter of Keudell to Richthofen, March 5, 1865: ". . . Der Legationssekretär Frhr. v. Loë, welcher auf seinen Wunsch, die Erlaubniss erhalten hatte, nach den Herzogtümern zu gehen . . . um zu prüfen, ob er selbst dort als Agitator nützen könne, ist heute zurückgekehrt und verneint Letzteres. Zugleich macht er aber folgende sehr wichtige Mitteilung: 'Baron Scheel-Plessen soll gegen ihn geaussert haben, er sei, wenn es diessseits wünschenswert erscheine, bereit, sich für eine active Agitation zu Gunsten der Annexionsidee, durch Schleswig-Holsteinische Agenten, zu interessiren. Er habe deshalb einige Vertrauensmänner aus verschiedenen Ständen auf Dienstag den 7. d. M. nach Kiel eingeladen. Die erforderlichen Geldmittel würden dort beschafft werden; doch sei es immerhin wünschenswert dass ein deisseitiges Interesse an der Sache auch durch einen Zuschuss an den Tag gelegt werde. ["Der Chef" (Bismarck) doubts Loë's accuracy and wants Richthofen to sound Scheel-Plessen]. Bejahenden Falles würden Sie in der Lage sein, zu erklären, dass das Verhältniss zu Oesterreich uns keine Verpflichtung auferlegt, einen Agitation welche *durch Schleswig-Holsteiner* zu unseren Gunsten getrieben wird, irgendwie entgegenzutreten; im Gegenteil würden wir unser Interesse an der Sache durch einen gewünschten Zuschuss zu den Geldmitteln beteiligen . . .'" (PGS).

⁴⁶ Halbhuber to Mensdorff, January 25, No. 10.

of the Prussian government."⁴⁷ Before Easter, Bismarck had sent Constantin Rössler from the *Wilhelmstrasse* to Hamburg, to coordinate and expand this important department of the propaganda service.⁴⁸

Baron Zedlitz also had received free-handed grants from Bismarck for the newspapers, but his chief task was rather to utilize his many contacts with prominent citizens to spread a fair version of Prussian news and views.⁴⁹ He was instructed to distribute liberally Prussian honors, decorations, and promises of favors.⁵⁰ He was ordered to combat Augustenburg propaganda by heralding the strength of Oldenburg's claims, and even by spreading the false news that Austria was ready to swing to Oldenburg.⁵¹ Finally, he was asked to send a stream of regular and thorough reports upon all happenings in the Duchies.⁵² They would supply ammunition for Bismarck against Austria during the coming weeks, and arouse William's spleen against Augustenburg.

The greatest stumbling blocks in the way of this Prussian offensive were the political societies, which had more recently begun to enter Schleswig with considerable popular success,⁵³ and the Holstein civil service (*Landesregierung*) whose duty it was to carry out all orders of the *Commissars* throughout both Duchies.⁵⁴ In the name of conservatism vs. democracy, Bismarck tried to secure Viennese approval for the repression

⁴⁷ This was somewhat exaggerated, but Baron Lederer, by no means fanatically anti-Prussian, was in a position to be well informed (Lederer to Mensdorff, April 21, No. 1).

⁴⁸ This is clear from Rössler's letters to Max Duncker, April 1865 to May 1866 (Max Duncker: *Politischer Briefwechsel aus seinem Nachlass*).

⁴⁹ Bismarck to Zedlitz, March 14, 1865 (*G. W. V.*, p. 127 ff.). Richthofen shared this task (Bismarck to Richthofen, March 12, 1865,—*G. W. V.*, p. 121 ff.).

⁵⁰ *G. W. V.*, p. 129.

⁵¹ Bismarck to Zedlitz, March 3 (*G. W. V.*, p. 110 ff.)

⁵² *Ibid.*

⁵³ Sybel IV, p. 67.—The pro-Prussian Tiedemann estimates that nine-tenths of the Schleswig officials belonged to the Augustenburg party (Tiedemann I, p. 431).

⁵⁴ Sybel IV, p. 65 f. Five out of six members were adherents of the Prince.

of the societies, a muzzling of the press, and rigid exclusion of the *Landesregierung* from participation in Augustenburg activities.⁵⁵

Since the departure of Rechberg, the *Ballplatz* no longer intended to countenance the unrestricted Prussian machinations. In late December, the too-conciliatory Baron Lederer was replaced by Baron Halbhuber, who had shown some energy as *Commissar* in Jutland in resisting Prussian encroachment.⁵⁶ The new commissioner advised his superiors not to hamper the *Vereins*, since they were the only organizations through which anti-Prussian feeling could be expressed.⁵⁷ He urged Mensdorff to purchase a Hamburg paper,⁵⁸ and he entered into unofficial relations with the principal men around the Prince.⁵⁹ But the chief difference between the new *Commissar* and his predecessors was his unsparing use of his veto-power on any and all acts of his colleague, which tended toward the slightest impairment of the independence of the Duchies. Zedlitz tried to consummate a telegraph union with Prussia, to subject the Holstein newspapers to license and control as in Schleswig, and to extend the Prussian-manned police of the northern Duchy to Holstein.⁶⁰ All these and many other well-

⁵⁵ G. W. V, pp. 57 f., 103 f.; Sybel IV, p. 67 f.

⁵⁶ Sybel IV, p. 65.

⁵⁷ Halbhuber to Mensdorff, January 25, No. 10

⁵⁸ Halbhuber to Mensdorff, February 15, No. 24. There is no evidence in the foreign office files as to whether this advice was followed. Doubtless it was taken up by Schmerling's press-bureau, which at this time put Halbhuber in touch with Dr. Moses May, editor of the *Schleswig-Holsteinische Zeitung*, the largest newspaper in the Duchies. (May had applied to a Dr. Pisling, on the staff of Schmerling's paper, the *Botschafter*, for an introduction to Halbhuber). The *Commissar* seems to have given May news items and to have paid him occasionally. At least, these facts were alleged to have been discovered by the Prussians in the papers of May, seized on July 25, 1865 (Bismarck to Werther, Bad-Gastein, August 5, No. 38, AGEV).

⁵⁹ Halbhuber wrote, "Ich benutze . . . jede Gelegenheit . . . um von öffentlichen politischen Kundgebungen abzumahnern und habe auch bei der Übersiedlung der Obersten Civil-behörde von Flensburg nach Schleswig dahin gewirkt, dass die bei diesem Anlasse beabsichtigten gutgemeinten Demonstrationen unterblieben." (to Mensdorff, February 15, No. 24).

⁶⁰ Halbhuber to Mensdorff, March 7, No. 44.

laid plans suffered shipwreck on the passive resistance of Baron Halbhuber.⁶¹

In new instructions, dated March 9, Mensdorff complimented his commissioner on the manner in which he had carried out the intentions of the *Ballplatz*, but cautioned him to avoid the least suspicion of appealing to the Augustenburg party against Prussia. "This very attitude will give you the right to combat most strenuously any tendency to undermine the popular desire for independence, to substitute specifically Prussian interests for common German welfare, and to prepare for the open or masked incorporation of the Duchies in Prussia." More than before, the *condominium* should be administered with the fullest equality for both copossessors.⁶²

This new firmness was announced in a leading Vienna paper,⁶³ that all might read, and declared before the *Reichsrat*, that all might hear.⁶⁴

THE COUNTER-ATTACK IN FRANKFURT

Similarly, under a cloak of loyalty to the alliance, the *Mittelstaaten* were encouraged. Mensdorff let Pfordten know that he had rejected Prussia's demands (Bismarck had already initiated Pfordten),⁶⁵ and saw no further reason for Bavaria

⁶¹ Bismarck realized that the *condominium* might prove embarrassing to Prussia (Bismarck to Goltz, February 6, *G. W. V.*, p. 74; Bismarck to Zedlitz, March 14, *G. W. V.*, p. 129).

⁶² Mensdorff to Halbhuber, March 9.

⁶³ *Neue Freie Presse* March 11, 1865. Also inspired article in the *Dresdener Zeitung*, March 16 (*Origines* VI, p. 45 ff.).—For the clever way in which Bismarck at once turned this against Austria and made her appear the aggressor, see *G. W. V.*, p. 132 f.

⁶⁴ Mensdorff's statement, March 30: ". . . Durch den Mitbesitz in den Herzogtümern ist Oesterreich in der Lage eine für sich nachteilige Lösung hintanzuhalten und die berechtigten Ansprüche des deutschen Bundes zu wahren. Dieselben Vorteile genießt Preussen mit dergleichen Berechtigung. . . ." (*Stenographische Protokolle des Hauses der Abgeordneten des Reichsrats*, III Session, II, p. 870).

⁶⁵ Pfordten went half way to meet Bismarck and was met with open arms (*G. W. V.*, pp. 112, 115). Blome learned very little about this Prusso-Bavarian *rapprochement* from Pfordten, whose remarks to the envoy as late as June bore an anti-Bismarck tinge.

to hold back the projected resolution.⁶⁶ But Pfordten now shelved upon Austrian shoulders all the responsibility for the success of the campaign in Frankfurt. He refused to canvass for votes,⁶⁷ and he left it to the *Ballplatz* to decide whether the original strong resolution should be toned down,⁶⁸ but insisted now that Beust should sponsor it by his side.⁶⁹ Mensdorff who had already summoned Baron Kübeck from Frankfurt, called Count Blome to Vienna to discuss ways and means.⁷⁰

By March 19, they had mapped out the strategy. Pfordten's resolution was accepted exactly as presented in January, without any weakening of its wording.⁷¹ As it stood, it was the strongest possible endorsement of Augustenburg, short of actual "recognition" by the Diet. Since haste was essential (the Bavarian chambers were to meet soon), Kübeck was ordered to call a special session of the Diet, and Austria would use her influence to secure an immediate vote, to prevent the resolution from being tabled. On behalf of his government, Kübeck would read an amicable declaration, reviewing the history of the Austro-Prussian negotiations and offering to confer the Duchies upon Augustenburg if Prussia was also willing.⁷² This program was calculated to secure for Austria

⁶⁶ ". . . wir [wollen] zwar die kön. bayerische Regierung zu diesem Schritte nicht auffordern . . . aber die Argumente erschöpft sind, durch die wir seither unsere Bundesgenossen von jeder Wiederanregung der Frage in Frankfurt zurückzuhalten gewünscht haben." (Mensdorff to Blome, March 6).

⁶⁷ Werner to Mensdorff, March 18, No. 29. Beust backed him up in this.—In February, Pfordten had sent a memorandum to several states, asking for support (Richthofen to Bismarck, February 16, No. 9, PGS).

⁶⁸ Blome to Mensdorff, March 7, No. 17A; Pfordten to Bray, March 20, tg. (copy in HHS).—Beust too, was ready even "to omit all mention of Augustenburg" in the resolution in order to obtain a majority of votes for it (Werner to Mensdorff, March 11, No. 26).

⁶⁹ Pfordten to Bray, March 11 (copy in HHS).

⁷⁰ Mensdorff to Kübeck, March 4, and tg. March 9; Mensdorff to Blome, March 10; *Origines* VI, p. 38.

⁷¹ Nor was it sharpened, as Hassel asserts (*Aus dem Leben des Königs Albert von Sachsen* II, p. 205).

⁷² Austria also said that she would not accept any solution incompatible with her own interests and those of the Diet. See the declaration in *Staatsarchiv* VIII, p. 375.

the maximum effectiveness from the vote with the minimum disloyalty toward Prussia. She violated no article of the alliance-protocol thereby.

On March 19, Mensdorff submitted this entire plan to Berlin, in a friendly note.⁷³ He disclosed the substance of Pfordten's resolution⁷⁴ and the whole of the projected Austrian declaration.⁷⁵ He claimed to have kept the *Mittelstaaten* from stronger declarations,⁷⁶ and urged Bismarck to join him in refraining from voting.⁷⁷ On March 25, Mensdorff telegraphed Berlin that on demand of the three states sponsoring the resolution, the special session would be held on the twenty-seventh.⁷⁸

Bismarck received these communications with a bad grace,⁷⁹ and made out the following case against his ally: Austria had misled him as to the tenor of the resolution,⁸⁰ which really "recognized" Augustenburg and went beyond the competence

⁷³ Mensdorff to Karolyi, March 19, sent on March 21 to the principal German and non-German courts for the guidance of the Austrian envoys.

⁷⁴ Though not actually quoted, Mensdorff's wording was almost identical with the Bavarian draft-resolution (hence Sybel IV, p. 70 needs correction). But the long "motivation" was not given to Prussia.

⁷⁵ Identically as given later in the Diet (*Staatsarchiv* VIII, p. 375).

⁷⁶ Pfordten had originally expected to demand full recognition for Augustenburg by the Diet. Sybel IV, p. 70 misinterprets this statement of Mensdorff's and his quotation from Pfordten is therefore beside the point.

⁷⁷ This was repeated on March 25 and 26.

⁷⁸ Mensdorff to Karolyi, March 25, tg. 1 p. m.

⁷⁹ Karolyi to Mensdorff, March 23, No. 16A.

⁸⁰ G. W. V. p. 137.—This charge was partly justified. The *Ballplatz* appears originally to have contemplated diluting the resolution, having heard that Pfordten intended merely to request that the Schleswig-Holstein settlement be expedited (Karolyi to Mensdorff, February 16, No. 10B), and Mensdorff expressed this idea to Werther (Werther to Bismarck, February 21, No. 46, HAA). As late as March 15, Werther wrote (after talking with Mensdorff): "Der Bayerische Antrag . . . soll den Wunsch der Beschleunigung . . . aussprechen und vielleicht (das scheint noch nicht gewiss) die Augustenburgischen Successionsansprüche nicht unerwähnt lassen." (Werther to Thile, letter of March 15, HAA). Unless Mensdorff was insincere, it would appear that Austria's decision to support the strong resolution was not taken much before it was conveyed to Bismarck.

of the Diet;⁸¹ Austria had sprung the matter suddenly upon him;⁸² Austria had entered engagements with other parties;⁸³ and the whole procedure was contrary to the spirit if not the letter of the alliance.⁸⁴ The Prussian minister refused to accept Austria's compromise proposal to abstain from casting a vote, although he thereby incurred the onus of being the first of the allies to take a public stand (if only a negative one) upon a solution of the Schleswig-Holstein question.⁸⁵ Enraged, he promised to use all his power to defeat the resolution.⁸⁶

Meanwhile, on March 21, Mensdorff had energetically set about canvassing Germany for votes.⁸⁷ The campaign was launched by a circular to all the German courts and the principal foreign capitals as well.⁸⁸ Count Ingelheim was sent to Brunswick to drum up another vote,⁸⁹ and Baron Werner left

⁸¹ *G. W. V.*, p. 138. Sybel IV, p. 71 agrees. This charge was successfully denied by Austria (Mensdorff to Karolyi, March 25).

⁸² *G. W. V.*, p. 144.—But Pfordten wanted the matter settled before his chambers met early in April.

⁸³ Bismarck's note to Karolyi (*G. W. V.*, p. 143; autograph original in HHS), which Sybel IV, p. 72 incorrectly quotes as a remark.—The charge is of course untrue. It was based on an illworded tg. of Mensdorff (to Karolyi, March 26).

⁸⁴ *G. W. V.*, p. 145.—The charge was justified. Bismarck had twice before warned Austria against an infraction of article 5 (*G. W. V.*, pp. 88 f. and 107 f.). Mensdorff carefully avoided an actual literal infraction, however.

⁸⁵ Cf. *Origines* VI, p. 84.—Bismarck admitted this (to Werther, March 30. *G. W. V.*, p. 146). Bismarck's own suggestion to refer the resolution to a committee would be tantamount to a hostile vote against the resolution.

⁸⁶ Karolyi to Mensdorff, March 23, No. 16A; Bismarck's circular tg. March 26 (*G. W. V.*, p. 140).

⁸⁷ Sybel (IV, pp. 70 and 72) makes the false accusation that Mensdorff notified his ally, Prussia, no earlier than the least of the German states. Quite the contrary, Mensdorff notified Bismarck 48 hours before he made his plans known even to Pfordten and Beust, the very sponsors of the affair.

⁸⁸ Mensdorff wrote, in brief, that he took no initiative in originating the Bavarian motion; was pleased that it expressed only "*vertrauensvolle Erwartung*"; he recognized the *Bund's* interest in the question, and therefore advised Berlin not to send the resolution to committee, but to abstain from voting. He gave assurances of regard for the interests of the German states, and his desire to inform them fully of his intentions, as proof of which the circular could be read to the ministers concerned (Circular, March 21).

⁸⁹ Mensdorff to Ingelheim, March 21, No. 4. Brunswick and Nassau together cast one vote. Nassau's support was assured in advance.

Dresden on a tour of the Thuringian courts.⁹⁰ At the same time, Mensdorff tried to bring Weimar and Hamburg into line,⁹¹ while false news of Prussian wavering was spread through the Frankfurt papers.⁹² Though an especially unctuous note to Hanover, entreating King George at least to abstain from actual opposition to the resolution,⁹³ proved ineffective, a final telegraphic appeal to Baden and Württemberg, probably swung the balance against Prussia on the 27th.⁹⁴ Before the definitive vote on April 6, Baden attempted to persuade Mensdorff to table Pfordten's resolution,⁹⁵ but when this was refused, reluctantly joined the Austrian cohorts.⁹⁶

It was an under-cover fight between the two allies to see which could draw the more adherents, and Austria won by a fair margin, 9 to 6.⁹⁷ But in diplomatic intercourse, each power assured the other that the divergence in the Diet would have no effect upon their mutual relations.⁹⁸ Mensdorff and Biegeleben both told Werther that the resolution would be of little use to anyone but Pfordten.⁹⁹ They had offered to tone down their declaration, if Prussia would,¹⁰⁰ and even when Bismarck sent regrets,¹⁰¹ the *Ballplatz* carried out its conciliatory gesture.¹⁰²

⁹⁰ Mensdorff to Werner, March 21.

⁹¹ Mensdorff to Kübeck, March 21. Austria could influence Hamburg policy to a certain extent through its consul-general, Merck, brother of the *Syndikus*, Merck. (Cf. *G. W.* IV, p. 15).

⁹² Savigny to Bismarck, April 6 (*Bismarck-Jahrbuch* VI, p. 46).

⁹³ Mensdorff to Ingelheim, March 21, No. 3. Mensdorff argued that it was an especially good opportunity to strengthen the *Bund* against threats to its existence.

⁹⁴ Mensdorff to envoys in Stuttgart, Karlsruhe, and Casel, March 26, tg. 4:20 p. m.

⁹⁵ Pilat to Mensdorff, March 31, No. 10A; *Origines* VI, p. 121.

⁹⁶ *Origines* VI, p. 121.

⁹⁷ *Staatsarchiv* VIII, p. 353 ff.

⁹⁸ Mensdorff to Karolyi, March 27, tg.; Bismarck to Werther, March 30 (*G. W. V.* p. 146); Karolyi to Mensdorff, March 31, No. 18A.

⁹⁹ Werther to Bismarck, March 23, No. 98 (HAA).

¹⁰⁰ Mensdorff to Karolyi, April 3; Bloomfield to Russell, April 5, No. 15; April 6, No. 16 Confidential (F. O. 7 Austria 683).

¹⁰¹ Karolyi to Mensdorff, April 5, tg. No. 36.

¹⁰² The concession was the insertion of a phrase, declaring that Austria did not entirely agree with the motivation of the Bavarian resolution.

Throughout the *démarche*, Austria had striven to remain scrupulously "correct." By voting for the Bavarian resolution, Austria did not pass judgment upon Augustenburg's legal claims nor recognize the right of the Diet to decide the legal question.¹⁰³ She merely maintained her stand of November 12, 1864, that the Prince's candidacy was the best political solution.¹⁰⁴ There was nothing final in either her declaration or her vote, that would exclude any other solution.¹⁰⁵ Nor was it the first time that she had publicly indorsed Augustenburg, for everyone remembered the declaration in London, in which Prussia had joined.¹⁰⁶

It is difficult to say whether the Austrians intended to face Bismarck with a sort of *fait accompli*. They had neither originated the Bavarian action nor encouraged it at first. But they had finally, under the provocation of the colossal February demands, seized upon the strongest resolution short of actual recognition, and labored for its success with every power at their command, in order to rally public opinion on behalf of a certain solution of the pending problem. Thus they had in reality used the *Mittelstaaten* against their ally. While correct in the letter, their action was therefore morally questionable; whether it was also politically questionable remained to be seen.

* * * * *

Who had engineered this reorientation of Austrian policy? Who had induced Franz Joseph to put teeth in the *condominium*, and to act contrary to his expressed conviction, "that the

¹⁰³ *Staatsarchiv* VIII, p. 347; Mensdorff to Karolyi, March 25 and April 3.

¹⁰⁴ Mensdorff emphasized to Bismarck the difference between a resolution recognizing Augustenburg's legal right to the throne, and the present request that Prussia and Austria temporarily give over the administration to the Prince. It was quite another question whether the two powers would accept the suggestion. But Mensdorff thought it far better to minimize the difference of view-points by refraining from voting (Mensdorff to Karolyi, March 25 and April 3).

¹⁰⁵ See *Staatsarchiv* VIII, p. 375.

¹⁰⁶ On the other hand, Prussia had publicly taken a stand in favor of annexation, when on January 11 William accepted and approved the contents of the Scheel-Plessen petition.

incitement of the *Mittelstaaten* against Prussia had shown itself to be a dubious expedient?"¹⁰⁷

Bismarck had induced his King to make demands beyond anything that Franz Joseph had imagined possible. The Emperor was disillusioned at both men,¹⁰⁸ but chiefly at the prime-mover, the masterful minister.¹⁰⁹ Bismarck had thus goaded the Emperor to retaliation, and the latter fell into the hands of those who bore Prussia a grudge, especially Biegeleben.

But there was Esterhazy to be reckoned with, too. The diminutive but influential Hungarian would have preferred to close the precarious Duchies quarrel then and there, by getting rid of Augustenburg, abandoning the *Mittelstaaten*, and handing over the prize to their conservative ally for a large sum of money.¹¹⁰ Possibly Mensdorff too would have welcomed such an easy way out of his difficulties.¹¹¹ That Esterhazy had been converted to the expedient of a money compensation, illustrates the strides that the Bismarckian proposal was making in Vienna.

The idea of a financial transaction, aired in the newspapers since January, had gained ground, especially in banking circles. Through his friend, Bleichröder, Bismarck had started secret parleys with the Rothschilds, while Werther had talked with Herr von Plener, who visioned his budget deficits swallowed up in a river of gold pouring forth from Berlin.¹¹² And King

¹⁰⁷ See his remarks in the council of October 31, 1864 (Appendix A, No. 3). Werther thought Esterhazy the prime-mover (Werther to Bismarck, March 6, No. 72, HAA).

¹⁰⁸ "I am assured that the Emperor is less under the charm of Bismarck and the King than he was, and that he has now received intelligence from Berlin which has profoundly shaken his confidence" (Bloomfield to Russell, letter of March 30.—F. O. 356 Bloomfield Papers 39).

¹⁰⁹ Bonar to Russell, March 9, No. 42 (F. O. 7 Austria 682). Mensdorff's note No. 2 of March 5 to Karolyi was really an appeal to William against his minister's policy.

¹¹⁰ Werther to Bismarck, February 27, No. 57 (Appendix A, No. 6).

¹¹¹ This might be inferred from his words to Könneritz (Friesen II, p. 117). Yet he later expressed strong repugnance to the idea.

¹¹² Werther to Thile, letter of March 15, 1865 (HAA); excerpts from a letter of Moritz Goldschmidt to Gerson Bleichröder, undated (HAA); Friesen II, p. 117.

William itched to possess the Duchies without drawing the sword.

"The matter might be expedited," he commented, "if the Kaiser would realize that a land-trade is against my honor, so that it is honor against honor,—and gold is certainly more malleable than the welfare of human beings."¹¹³

But Franz Joseph was adamant—and the negotiations languished.

The deadlock on compensations, Esterhazy wished to solve by prolonging the dual possession of the Duchies until some future war, when Austria could cede her share to Prussia and seek her compensation elsewhere.¹¹⁴ Probably Esterhazy had visions of a reconquest of Lombardy—as Bismarck had suggested—or a wholesale subjection of the "wickedly democratic" German states. At any rate, in the back of his mind, as in the back of Franz Joseph's, was the desire to conserve Prussia's strong right arm for that future European war which was to be the counter-revolution of conservative monarchy against the new democratic movement propagated from France and Italy, and all too rife in the South German states. For this reason, Esterhazy strongly advocated the prolongation of the *condominium*, and Mensdorff reluctantly agreed to it, trusting to some *deus ex machina* to find a way out of the precarious maze of the deadlock.¹¹⁵

Biegeleben, on the other hand, saw in the *provisorium* merely a slow preparation for annexation. He wanted to bring

¹¹³ Undated pencil note of King William (March 1865) (HAA).

¹¹⁴ Werther to Bismarck, February 27, No. 57 (Appendix A, No. 6).—Rechberg had expressed a similar idea in April 1864 (*G. W.* IV, p. 412, note 3).

¹¹⁵ Werther to Bismarck, March 6, No. 72 (HAA).—The foreign minister was most unhappy in his position. "Mensdorff, I believe to be sick of the work," wrote Lord Bloomfield, "but the Emperor will not let him slip, and the Countess is so happy in her exalted position, that she will keep him at his work. He would be a great loss, for though not clever, he is an honourable man and I believe can be trusted. He is popular in Austria with all parties and his manners are so courteous toward everybody that he has gained many supporters." (Bloomfield to Russell, letter of March 30. *F. O.* 356 Bloomfield Papers 39).

matters to a head before it was too late. From the first, he had upheld the principle that the Schleswig-Holstein question was an all-German question, and as such it was the Diet's right and duty, not to weigh the legal claims, but to preside over a settlement,¹¹⁶ to invent a political solution, while prescribing the modality of the legal settlement. In the *Ballplatz*, he kept alive the ideal that Austria's obligation to all Germany as the president of the Confederation was a higher one in the last analysis than her alliance with Prussia,¹¹⁷ and he had already persuaded Mensdorff and the Emperor to consider as a last resort the submission of the Schleswig-Holstein question to the Diet for settlement.¹¹⁸ Probably, had Biegeleben been the "director of the foreign office" at this time as completely as Friedjung would have us believe,¹¹⁹ he would have counselled an ultimatum to Prussia, for he thought that in the resultant rupture Austria would not come out the loser.¹²⁰ Nevertheless his influence was such that he allowed himself the privilege of acting upon occasion independently of Count Mensdorff.¹²¹ His firm definiteness, in contrast to the wavering uncertainties of Mensdorff and Esterhazy, his suspicions of Bismarck's policy which revealed themselves as justified

¹¹⁶ Rechberg to Chotek, August 4 and 14, 1864 really represented Biegeleben's ideas as much as Rechberg's.

¹¹⁷ This idea is insinuated in Mensdorff to Blome, January 14, 1865, and in his remarks to Werther (Werther to Bismarck, February 21, No. 46, HAA). Cf. Mensdorff to Metternich and Apponyi, March 9, No. 4: Austria would sacrifice the alliance if the interests and the dignity of the Empire were in peril.

¹¹⁸ Mensdorff's words in council of January 11, 1865 (protocol, in Appendix A, No. 4).

¹¹⁹ Friedjung I, p. 15.

¹²⁰ Friedjung II, p. 587; Biegeleben p. 300.

¹²¹ Cf. his proposal to Werther behind Mensdorff's back (below): his advice to the envoy of Coburg, to discount remarks of Mensdorff which differed from the policy laid down in Austrian notes (*Denkwürdigkeiten des Herzogs Ernst von Coburg* III, p. 479); and his remark to Kübeck that Mensdorff was "chicken-hearted" (Vogt p. 60). Mensdorff realized Biegeleben's malign influence (Mensdorff to Brenner, August 17, 1866.—Friedjung II, p. 646), but Biegeleben was protected by Franz Joseph and even by Esterhazy (Friedjung II, p. 589).

more clearly every day, had drawn the Emperor in fact if not in theory a step away from the Prussian alliance.

Again Franz Joseph steered the middle course: he would neither sell the Duchies, nor send an ultimatum to Prussia. He would prolong the copartnership (as Esterhazy wished) and put indirect pressure on his ally (as Biegeleben recommended). But did the Emperor and his advisers seriously believe that Bismarck would capitulate, that William would recede from his conditions and accept Augustenburg so cavalierly thrust upon him in the Diet? At least, they thought best to remind Prussia that Austria was still a power to be reckoned with in Germany.¹²² "We shall stay in the Duchies," said the Kaiser emphatically to Lord Bloomfield.¹²³ Mensdorff probably expressed his sovereign's feelings as he remarked to Werther in rejecting the Prussian conditions, that perhaps the future would provide some unforeseen solution. He considered this phase of the Schleswig-Holstein question an unfortunate one, but for the present he saw no other way out.¹²⁴

FIRST FRUITS OF THE NEW TACTICS

On the day after the victory of the "good cause" in the Frankfurt Diet, Count Mensdorff appeared before the Austrian council to explain the past and forecast the immediate future. After outlining the negotiations with Prussia during March, he ventured the opinion that Bismarck would not now proceed aggressively. "Besides," he added encouragingly, "the annexation-*penchant* seems to have received a blow, and all indications,¹²⁵ as well as the tamer tone of the Prussian

¹²² Possibly the taunts of weakness from London and Paris had some effect too. At least, Mensdorff took the trouble to defend Austrian policy against them (Mensdorff to Metternich and Apponyi, March 31, 1865, No. 1).

¹²³ Bloomfield to Russell, March 22, No. 4 Confidential.—F. O. 7 Austria 682.

¹²⁴ Werther to Bismarck, March 6, No. 72 (HAA).

¹²⁵ Mensdorff probably had in mind Bismarck's hints at territorial compensations for Austria, a theme he had never before entered upon (Karolyi to Mensdorff, March 11, No. 14A; March 17, No. 15A *Vertraulich*).

despatch of March 30, point to the fact that Prussia wishes to turn back. Austria will naturally assist such a retreat, for a separation is not intended. At any rate, no real support can be expected from the South German states, for they [are] guided . . . only by the desire to finish with their parliaments." Schmerling acquiesced, and told a joke at the expense of the "*Mittelstaatliche Bierhauspolitik*." To the police minister's skeptical remark that the whole situation was unsettled, Mensdorff replied, with more conviction than he really felt: "Unsettled situations are the proper *terrain* for diplomatic negotiations."¹²⁶

There was ample *terrain* of this sort for Austrian diplomacy in April and May 1865. Mensdorff's activities centered chiefly in Kiel and Berlin, but the *Mittelstaaten*, like poor relations, could not be kept entirely in the background. The victory of Pfordten and Beust in the Diet had produced different reactions in the breasts of those two stalwart knights. The Munich professor might declare with assumed confidence, that "the resolution" must be allowed to ripen in public opinion for a few weeks before the harvest could be gathered in,¹²⁷ and he might now appear before his parliament with an easier conscience.¹²⁸ In reality, he was discouraged, and more than ever ready to come to an understanding with Bismarck at Austria's expense.¹²⁹

Baron Beust saw things more rosily. He wished to capitalize the victory at once, to strike again while the iron was hot. In a lively private correspondence with Pfordten,¹³⁰ Beust urged his partner to take the next logical step and champion a new resolution: the Diet should formally recognize Augustenburg as Sovereign Duke, and accredit his representative in the assembly.¹³¹ The Saxon prime minister wished to spur

¹²⁶ Protocol of the council, April 7.

¹²⁷ Blome to Mensdorff, April 15, No. 24A.

¹²⁸ Pfordten's words to Prince Reuss (Sybel IV, p. 74).

¹²⁹ Blome to Mensdorff, April 15, No. 24A.

¹³⁰ Carried on unknown to their envoys (Blome to Mensdorff, April 26, No. 26B).

¹³¹ *Origines* VI, p. 136; Hassel: *Albert von Sachsen* II, p. 205 f.

Austria in this way to come to the defense of the *Bund* against the Prussian onslaught which such a resolution would call forth. Before his mind's eye appeared the vision of a liberal Great-Germany united in a central parliament under Austrian leadership, and he wished to see Austria enter the inevitable conflict with this program inscribed upon *her* banner instead of Prussia's.¹³² Again he urged Pfordten to back him in making this suggestion to Vienna, to take the leadership of the German national movement, to call a German parliament, and at the same time to summon the Estates of Schleswig-Holstein to indorse Augustenburg.¹³³

But Pfordten's imagination did not catch fire. He rejected every proposal of Beust but the very last.¹³⁴ He had already come to the conclusion that the only safe move was to call for a vote of the inhabitants of the Duchies,¹³⁵ an idea which had long been going the rounds of the smaller states,¹³⁶ and had recently been voiced both in the Austrian *Reichsrat*¹³⁷ and in the Frankfurt assembly.¹³⁸ Pfordten was ready to join Beust in bringing this matter before the Diet.¹³⁹

They were about to knock at Mensdorff's door for help, when they discovered that Bismarck was there ahead of them. The Prussian premier, too, had long entertained the scheme of

¹³² Beust had come around to this Schmerling program after the failure of his own reform plan, which was based on a dualistic-triastic principle. (See the project in *Aus Drei Vierteljahrhunderten* I, p. 298 ff.).

¹³³ Friesen II, p. 121.

¹³⁴ Hassel II, p. 205 f.; Friesen II, p. 121.

¹³⁵ Not a direct vote, but through the united *Landtag* of the Constitution of 1848 (Blome to Mensdorff, April 29, No. 28A).

¹³⁶ The idea of a plebiscite in the Duchies had been brought upon the carpet early in 1864 by France and the German Liberals.

¹³⁷ By Rechbauer, March 29 (*Stenographische Protokolle des Hauses der Abgeordneten des Reichsrats*, III Session, II, p. 847).

¹³⁸ By Baden and Hesse-Darmstadt on April 6 (*Staatsarchiv* VIII, pp. 368, 369). Roggenbach thought that Baden's declaration on this occasion caused Bismarck's later *démarche* in calling the Estates! (Frankenstein to Mensdorff, May 5, No 15B).

¹³⁹ Hassel II, p. 205 f.—The draft of such a declaration, given by Reculot (*Origines* VI, p. 155 f.), may have been Beust's draft.

calling the Schleswig-Holstein Estates, as an essential condition of winning French approval for annexation, and as a weapon against Austria.¹⁴⁰

"If [Austria] accepts," said Bismarck to young Platen,¹⁴¹ "her adherence will have a great repercussion in Hungary; if she rejects it, I can arouse public opinion against her. . . ." ¹⁴² Bismarck's first overture to Karolyi shortly after the vote in Frankfurt¹⁴³ was followed by an official proposition on April 17.¹⁴⁴ He left it to Mensdorff to choose the method by which the representatives would be called together "to provide a correct and regular expression of the interests, wishes, and legal views of the province."

The Austrian minister of foreign affairs was not pleased with the *démarche*, but he decided to give, as he later expressed it, not his willing approval, but only his permission for a measure which jarred legitimist nerves.¹⁴⁵ What determined the *Ball-*

¹⁴⁰ Jansen-Samwer p. 409; Napier to Russell, December 10, No. 19 (F. O. 64 Prussia 566); *Origines* V, p. 320, VI, pp. 28, 58; *G. W.* V, pp. 72 ff., 129 f.

¹⁴¹ Chargé of Hanover in Berlin.

¹⁴² *Origines* VI, p. 222.

¹⁴³ Bismarck said, "Er könne sich noch keineswegs recht vorstellen, welche Wirkung eine solche Massregel äussern würde, und dieser Umstand schütze ihn gegen die Unterstellung, dass er hiebei specifisch-preussische Interessen ins Auge fasse. Annexionistisch wurden jetzt die Stände nicht sein. . . . Bisher habe sich Oesterreich stets gegen die Einberufung der Stände ausgesprochen. Er bespreche jetzt dieselbe als eventuelles Mittel die Verhandlungen wieder in Fluss zu bringen." (Karolyi to Mensdorff, letter of April 8).

¹⁴⁴ *G. W.* V, p. 164 ff.; Sybel IV, p. 79.—Bismarck's henchmen in the Duchies all deplored the measure (Sybel IV, p. 78).—The following telegrams from Bismarck to Goltz are illuminating: ". . . Lassen Sie die Tatsache [Prussia's proposal to call the Estates] unauffällig in die dortige Presse gelangen und besprechen sie mit Herrn Drouyn. . . ." (April 20, No. 125). "Sobald die gewünschte Notiz in die dortige Presse gekommen, bitte ich Ew. Excellenz dafür zu sorgen, dass dies von dorther telegraphisch verbreitet werde, namentlich auch rasch hierher." (April 22, No. 130, PGS).

¹⁴⁵ Mensdorff to Halbhuter, June 18. The official acceptance, in note of April 27 to Karolyi (Sybel IV, p. 79 ff.). Contrary to Sybel's assertion, there is not the slightest evidence in Mensdorff's note that the proposition came "unexpectedly and inopportune."—Mensdorff told Bloomfield that Bismarck only proposed the *Landtag* in the hope that Austria would recoil from the idea, and consequently Bismarck was now disappointed (Bloomfield to Russell, letter of May 11.—F. O. 356 Bloomfield Papers 39).

platz to accept the scheme, however, beside the probability that the Estates would declare for the Prince, was the unanimously affirmative advice from Paris, from Augustenburg headquarters, and from the *Mittelstaaten*.¹⁴⁶

Pfordten, in fact, began another official correspondence with Vienna, volunteering long sheets of advice upon the legal aspects of the calling of the *Landtag*,¹⁴⁷ urging Austria not to create difficulties and to allow the *Bund* to participate in some way,¹⁴⁸ but agreeing to refrain from further resolutions while the negotiations were in progress.¹⁴⁹ Mensdorff did not encourage him but wisely kept him dangling.¹⁵⁰ When the Bavarian premier suggested that the German states offer to take part of the burdensome war-expenses off the shoulders of the Duchies, Count Blome warmly approved so timely a counter-stroke to Bismarck's ulterior plans to frighten the *Landtag*.¹⁵¹

On the whole, the *Ballplatz* during April and May, despite an occasional word of encouragement for the *Mittelstaaten*,¹⁵²

¹⁴⁶ Metternich to Mensdorff, April 23, tg. No. 30; Jansen-Samwer p. 464; Gebauer: *Herzog Friedrich VIII*, p. 149; Blome to Mensdorff, April 29, No. 28A; May 4, No. 29; Frankenstein to Mensdorff, Karlsruhe, May 5, No. 15B; Handel to Mensdorff, Stuttgart May 6, No. 26.

¹⁴⁷ Pfordten to Bray, May 8 (copy in HHS). Pfordten considered it essential to speed the matter in order to forestall Prussian intrigues. He rightly suspected that Bismarck intended to frighten the *Landtag* into a vote for annexation to Prussia, by picturing to them the mountainous debt they would have to bear as an independent state (Blome to Mensdorff, May 9, No. 31B).

¹⁴⁸ Pfordten to Bray, June 12 (copy in HHS). Pfordten had proposed to Bismarck on May 19, the participation of the *Bund*, but Bismarck had raised difficulties.

¹⁴⁹ Pfordten to Bray, April 29 (copy in HHS). Pfordten also advised concessions to Prussia in the Duchies, and admission of Schleswig into the Confederation.

¹⁵⁰ Mensdorff to Blome, May 14. (Cf. *Origines* VI, p. 236).—The gist of the note was that Pfordten's ideas were much the same as Austria's, but an intervention by the Diet would only create new difficulties.—On May 6, Mensdorff had authorized Blome to read to Pfordten the principal correspondence with Berlin.

¹⁵¹ Blome to Mensdorff, May 9, No. 31B.

¹⁵² Mensdorff's words to Gagern (Vogt p. 63), and to Knesebeck (in Bismarck's circulars of May 19 and June 5; Ysenburg to Bismarck, June 8.—Copies in AGEV), partly denied by Mensdorff (Werther to Bismarck, June 13, No. 174, HAA).

put the brakes upon any further action in Frankfurt, thinking that it had engaged itself far enough in this direction (if not too far) by the campaign of March.¹⁵³

* * * * *

Meanwhile, the "war" in the Duchies, between the imposing Baron Zedlitz and the impetuous Baron Halbhuber, had turned distinctly in Austria's favor. Through Austria's patronage of the Augustenburg resolution, the Prince's followers took heart, and the Austrian *Commissar* was maintaining his effective defense against Prussian propaganda. King William had to admit that Halbhuber knew well "how to prevent the trees from growing into the skies."¹⁵⁴ Once accustomed to control, Zedlitz now saw a tremendous shrinkage in his power to promote Prussian interests.¹⁵⁵ The struggle for public favor had become so intense, that the slightest retreat by one *Commissar* was at once capitalized by his rival and reflected in a loss of confidence among his own adherents.¹⁵⁶ In desperation, the Prussian commissioner was finally impelled to take independent (hence illegal) action to break through the web of vetoes carefully spun around him. Such an occasion arose in the so-called "Kiel affair."

On March 24, King William had signed an order to transfer the Prussian naval station from Danzig to Kiel.¹⁵⁷ On April 5, the news became public when war-minister Roon asked the Prussian parliament for the necessary funds to build fortifications in Kiel harbor, "of which Prussia is determined to remain in possession."¹⁵⁸ This threat to seize possession of

¹⁵³ Gramont speaks of the reserve of the *Ballplatz* toward the *Mittelstaaten* (*Origines* VI, p. 208).

¹⁵⁴ King William to the Duke of Weimar, letter of March 27 (*Kaiser Wilhelm's Weimarer Briefe* II, p. 62).

¹⁵⁵ Richthofen to Bismarck, letter of May 9 (HAA).

¹⁵⁶ Beside the members of the aristocracy who favored Prussia, a small so-called "National Party" had been organized in February, 1865, among the middle class. This party did not enter into relations with Berlin until May (Tiedemann: *Aus Sieben Jahrzehnten* I, pp. 419, 421, 429).

¹⁵⁷ Sybel IV, p. 72.

¹⁵⁸ *Kriegsminister von Roon als Redner* II (Breslau 1895), p. 204.

an important strategic point in Holstein, without the slightest mention of Austria's equal rights, aroused widespread comment throughout Europe. It was everywhere interpreted as Bismarck's answer to the recent vote in the Diet.¹⁵⁹ As it stood, it constituted a slap in Austria's face.

Mensdorff at once asked Karolyi to seek explanations from the fractious ally.¹⁶⁰ But Bismarck met this with such a hot-headed retort and defiant manner, that Karolyi pressed his chief for definite, positive instructions to prohibit the Prussian act, and suggested that he send a company of troops to Kiel as a sort of *noli me tangere*.¹⁶¹

Meanwhile, on April 4, Baron Zedlitz had approached Halbhüser to make the necessary preparations for the naval station (docks, barracks, etc.) and Halbhüser, without giving his consent, had simply referred the matter to Vienna.¹⁶² Thus forced to a decision, and hurt by Prussia's utter disregard for his feelings, Franz Joseph with unusual rapidity made up his mind to assert his rights. By telegram and instructions of April 11, Mensdorff ordered Karolyi to protest formally against Prussia's breach of the January protocol, the Vienna treaty, and the German federal pact, which guaranteed the

¹⁵⁹ Probably Bismarck had not expected so pugnacious a declaration from Roon, if he had any previous knowledge of the speech. Bismarck was certainly embarrassed by it, because it aroused intense feeling in Austria before he was ready for a crisis, and it caused Austria to forbid preparations in Kiel, which might have been permitted if requested quietly and gradually (Napier to Russell, April 15, No. 101 Confidential, F. O. 64 Prussia 574, Bismarck to Werther, April 17, *G. W. V.*, p. 161; Bernhardt p. 202). The fact that Bismarck, in order to get this Kiel fracas out of the way, accepted a slight defeat, would also support this view. Bismarck capitalized the false step as much as he could by calling it a counter-stroke.

¹⁶⁰ Mensdorff to Karolyi, April 6, tg.

¹⁶¹ Karolyi to Mensdorff, April 8, No. 22; letter of April 11. This suggestion was intended also to counter Bismarck's threat to expel Augustenburg from the Duchies (See below).

¹⁶² Halbhüser to Mensdorff, April 4, No. 91. On April 10, Baron Zedlitz and Admiral Jachmann tried again to get Halbhüser's consent, but the latter still refused, not having heard from Vienna (Halbhüser to Mensdorff, April 10, No. 99). He argued that the financial burden would be heavy and the political consequences detrimental.

integrity of every federal state including Holstein.¹⁶³ He forbade Halbhuber to approve any such measures,¹⁶⁴ and gave wide publicity to these acts.¹⁶⁵

Not long after, Halbhuber was astounded to read in the *Hamburger Nachrichten*, that on April 3 (the day before Zedlitz had first approached him) the Prussian *Commissar* on his sole authority had ordered the *Landesregierung* to further in every way the preparations for the new naval station, and the *Landesregierung* had issued a circular order to that effect.¹⁶⁶ At once, the Austrian *Commissar* cancelled the unauthorized order of his colleague and published his countermand.¹⁶⁷ The populace, whom Prussia's action had depressed, now sang the national hymn in the streets as on the day of the departure of the Danes, and Halbhuber's prestige rose immediately.¹⁶⁸ To emphasize Austria's possessory rights two Austrian warships were soon sent to Kiel harbor.¹⁶⁹

Bismarck began to draw in his sails. Masking this check, however, with an attitude of injured innocence, and a vivid description of William's violent anger at Austria's latest attempt to "reduce his rights," the minister-president implicitly

¹⁶³ Mensdorff to Karolyi, April 11, tg. and instructions.

¹⁶⁴ Mensdorff to Halbhuber, tg. of April 14 and instructions of April 16.

¹⁶⁵ In the Austrian press (Bloomfield to Russell, April 13, No. 25 Confidential. F. O. 7 Austria 683.—Cf. *Origines* VI, p. 146).

¹⁶⁶ Lederer to Mensdorff, April 21, No. 1; Halbhuber to Mensdorff, April 18, No. 114: "Die obige von Baron Zedlitz an die Landesregierung erlassene Aufforderung geschah daher wie es auch aus derselben hervorgeht, ohne mein Vorwissen und meine Zustimmung und erst aus der heute eingelangten Zeitung habe ich hievon Kenntniss erhalten."—If Halbhuber is correct, then the Prussian story, that he first gave his consent to Zedlitz, but later revoked it on orders from Vienna is false. (*G. W. V.*, p. 178; *Sybel* IV, p. 75; *Stern* IX, p. 404; *Jansen-Samwer* p. 458, all need correction). There is no reason to doubt Halbhuber's veracity, for after Mensdorff's explicit instructions in March (if not before) he would certainly be on his guard against any Prussian move.—Mensdorff later denied the Prussian story flatly (*Origines* VI, p. 253).

¹⁶⁷ Halbhuber to Mensdorff, April 18, No. 114 (also *Origines* VI, p. 153 f.).

¹⁶⁸ Lederer to Mensdorff, April 21, No. 1; *Origines* VI, p. 153.

¹⁶⁹ *Oesterreichs Kämpfe im Jahre 1866*, I, p. 10.

apologized for the Roon speech—"no seizure was intended, only occupation of the harbor, which was free to both powers";¹⁷⁰ he showed that only five more ships, with 1260 men, would be added to the ten ships which had been there for many weeks;¹⁷¹ and he offered to respect the occupation agreement by withdrawing an equal number of land troops.¹⁷² Franz Joseph was not inclined to reject the olive branch. Mensdorff accepted Bismarck's assurances gratefully,¹⁷³ and was ready to allow Prussia to make maps and surveys around Kiel, for such measures did not prejudice Austria's rights.¹⁷⁴ But the further request to build barracks was refused.¹⁷⁵ Halbhüser's conduct was approved in instructions which tactfully prescribed "calm firmness" with "considerate and conciliatory action."¹⁷⁶ Coupled with the obvious success of Austrian passive resistance in the Duchies, the compromise on Kiel was considered, even in Prussian and French circles, to be a victory for the *Ballplatz*.¹⁷⁷ No one but Bismarck knew that events were impending which would wipe out any petty victory over Kiel.

Another result of the Kiel flare-up was the beginning of a

¹⁷⁰ G. W. V, p. 177 f.; Karolyi to Mensdorff, April 25, No. 27A *Vertraulich*; Bismarck to Werther, April 17 (G. W. V, p. 159 f.); May 12, No. 176 (copy in HHS).

¹⁷¹ Bismarck to Werther, April 27, No. 158 (copy in HHS).

¹⁷² G. W. V, pp. 160, 178; Bismarck to Werther, May 12, No. 176 (copy in HHS).

¹⁷³ Werther to Bismarck, May 1, tg. No. 130 (AGEV).

¹⁷⁴ Werther to Bismarck, May 9, tg. No. 137 (AGEV); Mensdorff to Halbhüser, May 13. Cf. G. W. V, p. 183 f.

¹⁷⁵ Mensdorff to Karolyi, May 20 [No. 31]; Karolyi to Mensdorff, May 27, No. 35C.—Although Bismarck threatened to billet the sailors and marines on the Holsteiners, Sybel is hardly correct in asserting (IV, p. 76) that Prussia continued her works in Kiel harbor, and that Austria did not back up her protest.

¹⁷⁶ Mensdorff to Halbhüser, April 16.

¹⁷⁷ Bernhardt VI, p. 201, *Origines* VI, p. 185. It appears to have been the opinion also in Hanover (*Ibid.* VI, p. 224). Mensdorff remarked "that M. de Bismarck was evidently in a better mood than he had been for some time past [and that he] began to regret his unpopularity in Germany. . . ." (Bloomfield to Russell, May 4, No. 50 Confidential. F. O. 7 Austria 683).

rapprochement between Hanover and Austria, of significance for the future. The removal of the Prussian naval station to Kiel, if carried out, would constitute an immediate threat to Hanover's coasts.¹⁷⁸ And Bismarck's well-known intention to form a German navy around the Prussian fleet cut directly across Count Platen's plan to make the Hanoverian gunboats and the Austrian cruisers a nucleus for such a project.¹⁷⁹ In momentary fear that Bismarck would demand Hanover's signature to a naval convention, Count Platen, on April 21, made a first overture to Vienna.¹⁸⁰ He asked that Austria either maintain a permanent naval station in Geestemünde, where her ships had just passed the winter; or conclude with Hanover a naval treaty, which could be shown to Prussia as a *fait accompli*. Franz Joseph was willing to consider proposals,¹⁸¹ and Mensdorff wrote that a convention would serve the mutual interests of both, "as a recent event has borne witness."¹⁸² In further conversations with the Austrian envoy, Count Platen, who did not wish to anger Prussia, developed a unique scheme: Hanover would maintain an Austrian naval station, not as payment for Austrian protection, but only on condition that she received the Duchy of Lauenburg, which Prussia should cede first to Austria in return for Kiel harbor

¹⁷⁸ Other events, too, contributed to inflame King George's suspicions against Bismarck: the fear of a Prussian alliance with France (*Origines* VI, p. 225), and reports of Baron Stockhausen from Berlin, in May (Hassell: *Hannover* II-2, p. 250).

¹⁷⁹ For earlier negotiations, with Rechberg in August 1864, see Hassell II-2, p. 257.

¹⁸⁰ Ingelheim to Mensdorff, April 21, No. 20: Withdrawal of Austrian armored frigate from Hanoverian coast raises question here of future protection. Only the Austrian naval station keeps Hanover from Prussian encroachments. A small Hanoverian fleet of ships would not give protection. But a naval convention with Austria could be shown as a *fait accompli*. King and ministers even more favorable since Kiel affair, and chambers are quite out of patience with Prussia. Hanover will not take the initiative, but is ready to enter negotiations.—Hassell wrongly (II-2, p. 261 ff.) places these overtures in July and assigns the initiative to Austria.

¹⁸¹ The Emperor wrote a rare pencil note at the top of the envoy's report: "Diese Frage ist in nähere Erwägung zu ziehen. F. J."

¹⁸² Mensdorff to Ingelheim, April 30.

and other concessions from the list of February demands.¹⁸³ Since Austria had already offered Lauenburg to Prussia (without the knowledge of Hanover), and did not wish to compromise a settlement with her ally, the *Ballplatz* did not pursue the negotiations further at the moment, but by no means broke a thread which might become a desirable bond with Prussia's largest northern neighbor in case of need.

SCHEMES FOR A COMPROMISE

Meanwhile, the *Ballplatz* was grasping at every straw which seemed to indicate that Prussia would retreat on the main question of the future of the Duchies. For one thing, in spite of Bismarck's tales of the King's irritation, William had written a friendly note to Franz Joseph on the anniversary of the victory of Düppel.¹⁸⁴ The Emperor hastened to reply with an equally friendly warning not to allow politics to spoil what the companionship in arms had wrought so well.¹⁸⁵

For another thing, Bismarck had earlier opened a discussion with Karolyi on the heretofore forbidden subject of territorial compensation for Austria, and, to Karolyi's astonishment, had specifically mentioned the County of Glatz and the Hohenzollern Principalities.¹⁸⁶ "I can't say that if I were King of

¹⁸³ Ingelheim to Mensdorff, May 22, No. 25; May 26, No. 26A enclosing a memorandum of Platen. Hassell II-2, p. 261 f. dates this memorandum about July 261

¹⁸⁴ April 18. The King's letter is inaccessible. It was transmitted to Franz Joseph through Prince Schwarzenberg, whom the Kaiser had sent to Berlin to represent him at the unveiling of a victory monument. (For this mission, tgs. of April 13, in the Vienna *Kriegsarchiv: Militärkanzlei*). Sybel, Friedjung, and Stern were without knowledge of this exchange of letters, except for a hint in *Origines* VI, p. 170 f.

¹⁸⁵ Franz Joseph to William I, letter of April 24, 1865 (Original in BPH; printed in Appendix A below, No. 7).

¹⁸⁶ Bismarck was discussing the consequences of Austria's rejection of the February demands, by her note of March 5, which harped strongly upon the necessity of a compensation for Austria in proportion to Prussian acquisitions in Schleswig-Holstein.—The following episode is not found in Sybel, Friedjung, nor Stern, nor any other account except for a hint in "Fragmente aus dem Nachlasse des ehemaligen Staatsministers Grafen Richard Belcredi," in *Die Kultur*, 1906, p. 9.

Prussia, I would not transact this business with you," said Bismarck. But the King and the parliament, he admitted, were violently opposed. "Organize a movement for annexation," he counselled. "Stir up demonstrations in favor of joining Austria. I will gladly keep my eye on them."¹⁸⁷ At various times thereafter, the idea of a territorial compensation was touched upon. Karolyi became convinced that "the minister-president is strongly in favor of it" and "has repeatedly, but fruitlessly, tried to win His Majesty over to it. . . . Other political personalities," wrote the envoy, "would also be inclined to strike out in this direction. . . . Public opinion and the parliament might be persuaded to accept it if the Prussian cabinet would openly follow that path."¹⁸⁸

Was it purely a coincidence that, just as the idea of selling the Duchies was winning influential converts in Vienna, Bismarck should for the first time indicate his own personal support of territorial compensation to Austria? The more he talked of Glatz, the less would be the likelihood of Franz Joseph's acceptance of a "dishonorable" money-transaction; and so much the more would Austria harp on the land exchange, and thereby anger the King. If Austria took Bismarck's advice, and stirred up demonstrations in Prussian Silesia, Bismarck could either support Austria's case or denounce the "Austrian plot" to William, and widen the breach. It is highly improbable that Bismarck seriously tried to convert the King, or even desired to do so.¹⁸⁹ There is no other evidence to support Karolyi's assertion; the Austrian envoy was always too ready to accept Bismarck's words at their face value; he never penetrated the subtleties of Bismarck's policy and relationship toward his King. When Bismarck in the council suggested various roads to annexation, a territorial compensa-

¹⁸⁷ Karolyi to Mensdorff, March 17, No. 15A *Vertraulich*.

¹⁸⁸ Karolyi to Mensdorff, May 13, No. 31E *Vertraulich*.

¹⁸⁹ Manteuffel, who was in a position to know the facts, told the Austrian general Gablenz some months later, "that he [Manteuffel] wished to see Austria indemnified with territory and money, whereas the Minister-President was less inclined in that direction." (Gablenz to Mensdorff, December 31, 1865, No. 42).

tion was not among them.¹⁰⁰ Even Karolyi admitted that if Bismarck seriously made the matter a cabinet question, he might win the King.¹⁰¹ When the Austrians discreetly and indirectly tested Bismarck's good-will in May, they only met with a rebuff.¹⁰²

A number of other schemes for an Austro-Prussian compromise appeared in the German press during the spring. Some were trial-balloons, inspired "in high quarters," others merely well-meant endeavors of private persons to heal the festering sore in the Confederation. Even the conservative *Kreuzzeitung*, which for months had backed Bismarck against Austria, now launched the suggestion that in return for the annexation of the Duchies, Prussia and the Diet should guarantee the entire possessions of Austria by admitting them to the *Bund*.¹⁰³ This was symptomatic of the attitude of the Prussian conservatives, who disliked the thought of a rupture from which France alone would profit.¹⁰⁴ Some, like General Moltke, favored a cession of the Hohenzollern lands.¹⁰⁵ Others, like

¹⁰⁰ Council of May 29, 1865 (Minutes in Appendix A, No. 8).

¹⁰¹ Karolyi to Mensdorff, May 13, No. 31E *Vertraulich*.

¹⁰² The Varnbüler-Spitzemberg mediation plan; see below in this chapter.

¹⁰³ *Kreuzzeitung*, May 2, 1865 (*Origines* VI, p. 203 f.). The same idea had been put forward in March by the Vienna *Fremdenblatt*, probably without official inspiration (*Origines* VI, pp. 9 f, 96 f, 143), and appealed particularly to the population on the Rhine (*Allgemeine Zeitung*, No. 119, Koblenz correspondence of April 27, 1865). Bismarck had "friendly words" for the idea, according to a well-informed correspondent (*Allgemeine Zeitung*, No. 133, Berlin correspondence of May 10, 1865).

¹⁰⁴ They suggested various forms of a guarantee for Venetia, or an alliance against France (Ritter: *Die preussischen Konservativen* p. 123).

¹⁰⁵ *Aus dem Leben Theodor von Bernhardis* VI, p. 167. Moltke wrote to a friend: "Die Oesterreicher haben nun einmal ein wohl-begründetes Recht und werden es für ein Linsengericht nicht fortgeben. Für Preussen handelt es sich um einen Erwerb nicht so gross aber eben so wichtig wie der, für welchen der grosse König drei Kriege führte. Würde er nicht Schlesien recht gern für ein Stück Jülich oder Geldern eingetauscht haben?" (Unpublished letter of July 2, 1865, PGS: *Nachlass Edwin von Manteuffel*). Moltke wrote on his copy of the protocol of the Prussian council of May 29: "Ein wichtiger Punkt, der nicht besprochen worden, ist, wie man den begründeten Ansprüchen Oesterreichs gerecht werden will" (Lettow-Vorbeck: *Geschichte des Krieges von 1866 in Deutschland* I, p. 11 note 1). See also Sybel IV, p. 89, and Moltke's introduction to the Prussian general staff's publication, *Der Feldzug in Deutschland* I, p. 3.

General Manteuffel, preferred to slice Germany in halves at the Main, the northern for Prussia, the southern for Austria,¹⁹⁶ — and a similar idea was more guardedly broached even in the Berlin parliament.¹⁹⁷ There was then in Prussia a strong current, flowing into the innermost court circles, favoring the offer of some compensation which Austria was more likely to accept. But in spite of this body of opinion, in spite of Bismarck's overtures (the sincerity of which Karolyi apparently did not question),¹⁹⁸ the Austrian envoy considered the actual achievement of a territorial exchange very remote because of the King's determined opposition.¹⁹⁹ Nevertheless, the *Ballplatz*, always ready to catch at straws, gained a modicum of consolation from Bismarck's fair words.

Still another source of hope was the prevalent opinion that Bismarck's ministry might not long survive.²⁰⁰ In May, both the King and the Prussian parliament rejected a compromise army-bill, and the chamber refused to vote funds to carry on the government. The position of the ministry was so serious that Bismarck meditated upon a *coup d'état* or "complications in the foreign situation" to help him out.²⁰¹ With the constant opposition of the Coburg-Augustenburg party at court, and the influence of the conservative militarists pulling

¹⁹⁶ Manteuffel to Bismarck, letter of May 23 (*Bismarck-Jahrbuch* IV, p. 103).

¹⁹⁷ Speech of Anton von Gablenz (Ritter p. 125 note 74, and chapter xi below).

¹⁹⁸ There is no extant source, so far as I know, to confirm Karolyi's impression that Bismarck actually urged and desired the King to cede territory of any sort or amount to Austria. On the contrary, his tactics resemble those he used toward Napoleon, which he later described so frankly in the well-known letter to the King in 1873 (Kohl: *Anhang* I, p. 243 f.).

¹⁹⁹ Karolyi to Mensdorff, March 11, No. 14A, and May 13, No. 31E. This was entirely in harmony with Bismarck's policy toward Karolyi from March to June, viz. to picture himself as "Austria's advocate," and William as very angry, very annexationist, and ready at any moment to draw the sword. A truer picture of Bismarck's and the King's convictions and the will to attain them is to be seen in their remarks at the council of May 29 (Sybel IV, pp. 87-90; and Appendix A, No. 8).

²⁰⁰ Cf. Schmerling's words in council of April 7 (protocol, HHS).

²⁰¹ Stern IX, p. 586 f.

William in directions contrary to Bismarck's, the path of the premier was far from rosy. While frankly admitting this fact to the foreign envoys (Bismarck even told Karolyi that he thought of asking for two months leave),²⁰² he sought to counteract its effect by harping on the King's determination to go to war for his rights.²⁰³ Karolyi at least discounted the rumors of a change of ministry,²⁰⁴ and the *Hofburg* would certainly have disliked to see a liberal in Bismarck's place.²⁰⁵ But they were not sorry to learn that the minister-president was in a position where he might have to trim his sails to the Austrian breeze in order to move forward.

* * * * *

Many circumstances, the success in the Duchies, the clamor of the Conservatives for a fair compensation to Austria, the Prussian internal conflict, encouraged the belief in Vienna that the March policy would eventually produce results. But with so clever an opponent as Bismarck one could never be certain, and therefore a number of indirect overtures were made to induce Bismarck to reopen negotiations on better terms than the February demands.

The first *démarche* came from Biegeleben, acting without the knowledge of Mensdorff.²⁰⁶ One day toward the end of March, Baron Werther engaged the *Geheimrat* in a conversation over Schleswig-Holstein.²⁰⁷ Biegeleben gave it as his opinion that, first and foremost, the two powers should decide upon the sovereignty of the Duchies.²⁰⁸

²⁰² He told Karolyi that he was hurt because the King blamed him for the conclusion of the Austro-Prussian commercial treaty on a basis favorable to Austria (Karolyi to Mensdorff, April 27, No. 28A). Cf. William's note, April 24 (*Anhang* I, p. 118).

²⁰³ Karolyi to Mensdorff, April 25, No. 27A *Vertraulich*; Hassell II-2, p. 247.

²⁰⁴ Karolyi to Mensdorff, April 27, No. 28A.

²⁰⁵ Cf. Blome to Mensdorff, August 14, 1865, No. 2 (Appendix A, No. 9).

²⁰⁶ As the incident throws a welcome light upon the inner working of the *Ballplatz*, it is worth looking into in detail.

²⁰⁷ "Vor einigen Tagen," wrote Werther to Bismarck, April 1, No. 108 (HAA).

²⁰⁸ The note of March 5 had closed with this idea.

"Here," he said, "the Prince of Augustenburg had been proposed, not because of a special affection for him, but because this combination was the easiest to effect in the Duchies and Germany. Once this question [of the sovereign] were settled, the approval of Prussia's demands . . . by the future Duke would not be difficult to secure. Austria's consent would be lacking . . . but if the future sovereign agreed to them, Austria would assume a passive stand,²⁰⁹ analogous to its attitude toward Prussia's military conventions with Coburg and other German states, which were not recognized *de jure* by Austria. But if Prussia desired a special understanding with Austria, the conditions . . . in the dispatch of March 5 showed the basis upon which Austria could meet Prussia's wishes."²¹⁰

The suggestion that Prussia deal directly with the claimant naturally aroused Bismarck's curiosity to know whether it represented Mensdorff's views.²¹¹ Werther was sent back to find out more about the strange scheme, which appeared to purchase the Augustenburg investiture on Prussia's terms rather than Austria's.

Before the envoy executed this commission, however, a new incident intervened to alter somewhat the attitude of Biegeleben. The candidate in question secretly accepted most of Bismarck's February program, and made this known to Vienna, Munich, and Dresden.²¹² These far-reaching offers naturally

²⁰⁹ Biegeleben's proposal was an adaptation of a compromise plan emanating from Baden. On March 23, Baron Roggenbach had agreed with Samwer to suggest in Berlin and Vienna a compromise in the military arrangements for the Duchies on these lines: I, Austria to allow Prussia to settle them with the Duke, and then sanction their agreement; II, until this was reached, Prussia might keep 10,000 men in the Duchies, while the Duke would have none (Jansen-Samwer p. 452). This idea was seized upon by Biegeleben to further his own plan of installing Augustenburg *before* settling Prussia's conditions.

²¹⁰ Austria had positively accepted four conditions: Rendsburg, Kiel, Canal, *Zollverein*; and presumably had not taken back her offer to let Prussia recruit sailors in the Duchies.

²¹¹ The way in which Bismarck twisted these overtures to suit his own purposes may be seen in his words to the Hanoverian chargé (Hassell II, Heft 2, p. 248).

²¹² The Prince's offers were first made by letter to the Prussian *Kronprinz*, but were communicated to Vienna in the "*etwas abgeschwächten*" form of a memorandum for Herr von Ahlefeldt (Jansen-Samwer p. 456; Gebauer: *Herzog Friedrich VIII von Schleswig Holstein* p. 147). Letter and memorandum printed in Jansen-Samwer pp. 753 ff., 756 ff.

caused consternation in the *Ballplatz*. Biegeleben said to the Augustenburg agent, "We have no more interest in the Duke now . . . we shall use him only as a stop-gap. . . ." ²¹³

When Werther came to question Mensdorff, and asked that Biegeleben be called in to substantiate his former proposal, the *Referent's* tune had changed.

"He could not deny his statements," wrote the envoy to his chief, "but he did not seem pleased that I had remembered them completely, and said I had given them too definite a turn. He could not undertake that Austria should remain utterly passive toward a direct understanding between Prussia and the claimant. And it was always his idea that the future Duke should first be installed in the Duchies before we entered into negotiations with him, as with any other German Prince. . . . We then could obtain the approval of our demands, so far as our interests required." Werther turned to Mensdorff, but the foreign minister disavowed the scheme at once, doubtless scenting in it more friction than pacification of his ally. "He thought that an understanding on our demands should and must take place between Austria and Prussia. We would still gain great advantages by this road, if we would only moderate our demands a bit, for the Vienna cabinet always entertained the best will in that direction." ²¹⁴

The incident was closed. Biegeleben's attempt to foist Augustenburg on Prussia, doomed by its very nature, was frustrated by the Prince himself and by the Austrian minister. Mensdorff returned to the Prussian basis: satisfaction of Prussia's conditions *before* decision as to the sovereign. Time and time again during April and May he reiterated to Werther, and Karolyi repeated to Bismarck, Austria's readiness to discuss the Prussian terms in an atmosphere of mutual concessions. ²¹⁵ Mensdorff was not displeased that the *Erbprinz* had

²¹³ Vogt p. 64. He found the concessions far too broad, and regretted that the Duke had signed the memorandum (Jansen-Samwer p. 456). He complained also that it had been presented in Vienna later than in Berlin (Inspired article in *Allgemeine Zeitung*, No. 136, Vienna May 14, 1865).

²¹⁴ Werther to Bismarck, April 27, No. 127 (HAA).

²¹⁵ To Werther: Werther to Bismarck, April 12, No. 118 postscript; April 27, No. 127; May 1, tg. No. 130; May 18, No. 152; May 23, No. 159 (HAA). — Mensdorff had instructed Karolyi in a letter of March 5 (not in HHS) to grasp any opportunity of renewing negotiations on a more favorable basis (Werther to Bismarck, March 6, No. 72 [HAA], and Karolyi to Mensdorff April 8). Further instructions in Mensdorff to Karolyi, April 16; April 20; May 25 *Reservirt*.

gone far to meet Prussia,²¹⁶ for such conciliation should make his candidacy more acceptable to King William. Early in May, Mensdorff thought that he saw symptoms of a better disposition in Berlin,²¹⁷ and as an offer of mediation came just at this time from Stuttgart, the foreign minister seized upon it as an opportunity to approach the *Wilhelmstrasse* without assuming the onus of a direct initiative.

Baron Varnbüler offered two bases for a compromise:²¹⁸ Oldenburg in the Duchies, or annexation to Prussia. In the first case, Prussia would receive only those concessions that Austria was already willing to grant.²¹⁹ In the second, Prussia would repay her ally with land (the County of Glatz), and money (war costs and more).²²⁰ In both cases,—and here was the new element,—Prussia was to give up the Hohenzollern Principalities in exchange for Lauenburg.²²¹ At the end of the memorandum, Varnbüler slipped in this tell-tale sentence: "If Austria receives Hohenzollern, then Würtemberg would offer for it a sum of money, which (if it appeared high enough) Austria would surely be inclined to accept."

Austria had everything to gain and nothing to lose by accepting Varnbüler's services, but his program presented grave objections. Biegeleben therefore replied with a counter-mem-

²¹⁶ Inspired article in *Allgemeine Zeitung*, No. 140, Vienna correspondence, May 18, 1865. Cf. Jansen-Samwer p. 456.

²¹⁷ Bloomfield to Russell, May 4, No. 50 Confidential (F. O. 7 Austria 683).

²¹⁸ Draft memorandum, undated and unsigned, filed among despatches from Stuttgart in HHS. It was brought to Vienna by Baron Spitzemberg, son-in-law of Varnbüler and envoy of Würtemberg in St. Petersburg (cf. Fröbel: *Ein Lebenslauf* pp. 424-425).

²¹⁹ Prussia would have the right, exclusively or with the new Duke, to garrison Rendsburg and Kiel; and, by agreement with the Duke, to acquire sailors in the Duchies. She must also pay Austria's war expenses. (Varnbüler's memorandum, HHS).

²²⁰ Annexation would be obtained through a vote of the Estates, to satisfy the Diet. If Prussia refused to cede Glatz, the money indemnity should be increased! (Varnbüler's memorandum, HHS).

²²¹ But Prussia would retain the castle of Hohenzollern and its fortified area (*Ibid.*).

orandum,²²² which pounced eagerly upon the Hohenzollern-Lauenburg exchange. But in place of Varnbüler's two alternatives now appeared the Prince of Augustenburg.²²³ To make his candidacy more palatable, Mensdorff went beyond his previous offers in two respects: the introduction of military arrangements in the Duchies identical with those of Prussia, and the annexation of certain strategic points to Prussia. If Prussia wished exclusive garrison right in the northern outpost of Rendsburg, she might leave Rastatt (a South-German fortress) for Austria to garrison. Mensdorff neither agreed nor refused to hand over Hohenzollern to Stuttgart.²²⁴ "A money equivalent," he wrote diplomatically, "is far from counterbalancing the value attached to an increase of territory by the Monarchy in its present political and moral position." Destined for Varnbüler's private attention, this document was not intended to be communicated *ipsis verbis* to Berlin.²²⁵

Varnbüler no longer recognized his program. Probably he disliked to sponsor Augustenburg in Berlin. Instead of embodying it in a communication of his own, he gave Biegeleben's memorandum, without change, to his son-in-law, Baron Spitzemberg, to drop upon the doorstep of 79 Wilhelmstrasse, "as a view prevalent in high Vienna circles, which might lead to

²²² *Draft* (in HHS) in Biegeleben's hand, undated, entitled "Betreffend die Vereinigung Hohenzollerns mit der oesterreichischen Monarchie."—Original (in HAA) in the hand of Baron Max Werner, Mensdorff's secretary, dated "Wien, 6 Mai 1865." Beside the original lies a *lithographed copy* (in the hand of a secretary in the HAA), at the top of which is written: "S. Instruction für Genl. v. Manteuffel 19/5." At the side, in Abeken's hand: "*Zu den Sekreten Akten.*—Von dem Württembergischen Vertreter in St. Petersburg H v Spitzemberg bei seiner Durchreise durch Berlin vertraulich mitgeteilt—als eine in hohen Kreisen in Wien geltende Ansicht, die vielleicht zur Verständigung führen könne."

²²³ Oldenburg was not entirely excluded.

²²⁴ In some quarters, the cession of Hohenzollern to Bavaria was mooted. Bavaria would grant Austria a frontier-rectification, possibly Berchtesgaden (Well-informed article in *Allgemeine Zeitung*, No. 131, Vienna May 9, 1865). This project, too, may have originated in Stuttgart (*Origines* V, p. 388).

²²⁵ This is indicated by certain expressions, and by the last paragraph, in which the refusal of a money compensation is not stated so positively as formerly, and no longer put on the basis of honor (cf *Origines* VI, p. 405).

an understanding."²²⁶ If we may believe Bismarck, the project merely heaped further coals upon the flame of William's anger.²²⁷ The minister spoke of it scornfully, considered it as entirely an Austrian manoeuvre, and made no reply to it whatsoever.

A fortnight later Mensdorff put forth further feelers in his characteristically conciliatory manner.

"He personally would by no means oppose annexation if compensation were possible," Werther reported, "but since the latter couldn't be found, the former was not thinkable. . . . He [Mensdorff] had the firm conviction that Prussia *alone* was in a position to derive benefits from the Schleswig-Holstein question, but she should lower her demands somewhat, and Austria herself should grant somewhat more than heretofore. The acquisition of Lauenburg he seemed to bring into the combination in our favor. In such a way, by mutual concessions, he considered an understanding quite possible, and wished for it with all his heart. He added the definite assurance, that the Emperor and he, as his minister, laid the greatest weight upon the continuance of intimate relations with Prussia, but we also would have to facilitate [the working of] this alliance, which the Vienna cabinet so greatly desired."²²⁸

Shortly after this conversation, Mensdorff secured Franz Joseph's consent to offer the cession of Austria's rights in Lauenburg for money alone, thereby accepting William's point of view with regard to this portion of the common territories.²²⁹

It was in vain. These overtures failed to elicit a word of

²²⁶ Abeken's marginal (see above). Garbled hints of Varnbüler's *démarche* leaked out, partly through the author (*Origines* VI, p. 246), Bismarck (*Ibid.* pp. 209 ff.; 261; 275 ff.; Hassell II-2, p. 250), and the *Ballplatz* (Vogt p. 64; *Origines* VI, p. 245; *Allgemeine Zeitung*, No. 131, Vienna May 9). Bismarck ordered his press to sound public opinion on the cession of Hohenzollern (*Origines* VI p. 210). Articles appeared in the *Kölnische Zeitung* and elsewhere (Vogt p. 64).

²²⁷ *Origines* VI, p. 261 (Bismarck mentioned merely the Hohenzollern-Lauenburg exchange to Benedetti).

²²⁸ Werther to Bismarck, May 18, No. 152 (HAA), reporting interview of May 17. Sybel (IV, p. 85) calls such remarks "the characteristically haughty tone of the *Ballplatz*." His summary of this conversation is a good example of the way in which he deliberately altered his sources to conform to his literary aims and nationalistic purpose. (Incidentally he gives the wrong date).

²²⁹ Werther to Bismarck, May 23, No. 159 (HAA).

recognition from Berlin. Bismarck had no intention of meeting Austria half way. On the contrary, a storm had been brewing there which boded ill for the ally on the Danube. A few outlying clouds had begun to cast shadows even in the sunshine of Vienna, but as yet only distant muffled thunder from the region of the Spree could be heard by the statesmen of the *Ballplatz*.

CHAPTER VII

BISMARCK CREATES A CRISIS

As Bismarck had foreseen from the beginning, the double occupation of the Duchies presented a political situation fraught with dynamite, breeder of quarrels rather than amenities. With this inflammable material it would not be difficult to fashion a crisis, if Austria continued to refuse the terms upon which Prussia was willing to live at peace with her ally. Bismarck assured himself that the crisis, when it came, would be an Austrian, not a Prussian, "Olmütz," for the Danube monarchy this time lacked a Schwarzenberg;¹ and the cards were more favorable to Prussia, provided King William was made of firmer mettle than his brother, who had yielded in 1850. Bismarck thought that he was.²

The first step had been taken by means of the February demands; the King had been brought to believe that he had a "right" to a semi-sovereign position over Schleswig-Holstein. After Austria's rejection, Bismarck had told the King that he must be prepared for war, if Prussia were to obtain these rights. As the public clamor for annexation increased, and the army demanded the Duchies as its reward for the campaign of 1864, and Bismarck harped on the chord of Prussia's security, the King's innate desire to add territory to his country was greatly strengthened. At the same time, he became embittered at his ally because of Kiel and Halbbücher. Austria's efforts on behalf of Augustenburg seemed to him direct attacks on his own just claims. Still, the King recoiled

¹ Cf. Manteuffel's words to Zichy (Vogt p. 68).

² "Frederick William IV always loaded his gun but never fired," said Bismarck to Stockhausen, "The present King is consumed with the desire to fire." (Hassell: *Geschichte des Königreichs Hannover* II-2, p. 252). "He is a real King of Prussia, served by real Prussians," Bismarck told Gramont (*Origines* VI, p. 327).

from the thought of a fratricidal struggle in Germany, not so much out of friendship for Austria, as because of suspicion of Napoleon's actions.³ Bismarck's problem was therefore, first, to concentrate upon a simple and appropriate issue which would place William in such a position that he would be forced, to draw the sword if Austria did not yield;⁴ and, secondly, to time the rupture to the best advantage.⁵

When Austria backed the strong Augustenburg motion in the Diet, Bismarck knew that Austria had taken a position from which it would be difficult to retreat. He set out at once to "ruin Augustenburg."⁶ The situation in the Duchies was becoming really hopeless for annexation. The "excesses" of the Augustenburg party touched William to the quick, and Bismarck made brilliant capital of them.⁷

Early in May, the minister-president began more definitely to concentrate upon his "issue." His first move was a polite but formal demand that Austria join him in expelling "the

³For William's sense of injury, see above, chapter i, and Marcks: *Kaiser Wilhelm I.*, p. 230.

⁴Cf. Brandenburg. *Untersuchungen und Aktenstücke*, pp. 434 ff., 505, and elsewhere.

⁵Bismarck knew that to a certain extent he could direct the crisis as he wished. See his instructions to Goltz (*G. W.* V, pp. 72 ff, 92 ff, 171), his words in council of May 29 (Appendix A, No. 8), his note to Roon (*G. W.* V, p. 224 ff.).

⁶Károlyi to Mensdorff, letter of April 8. "... Herr von Bismarck sieht in diesem, wie er behauptet, überstürzten Vorgehen [the Bavarian resolution of April 6] die Absicht 'Preussen zu überrennen,' und benutzte jetzt diesen Umstand, um seinen ursprünglich gegen die Augustenburgische Candidatur gehegten Widerwillen neue Belebung und grössere Intensität zu geben. Er giebt zu verstehen, dass Preussen nunmehr alle Hebel ansetzen wird, um die Augustenburgische Lösung zu hintertreiben. . . ."

⁷One of Bismarck's most effective weapons was a series of offensive remarks attributed to Halhuber: "Austria could give Prussia a second Olmütz," etc. Though the *Commissar* denied having said these things (Halhuber to Mensdorff, April 19, No. 118) there was doubtless some truth in the accusations (cf. his words to Tiedemann: *Aus Sieben Jahrzehnten* I, p. 433 f.). In June, the friendly Thile told Chotek that the whole Prussian court now believed that all Austrians including the conservatives, were hostile to Prussia,—a belief based chiefly on Halhuber's winged words (Chotek to Mensdorff, June 19, No. 41C).

Prince and his so-called ministry" from the Duchies, the excuse being—"so as not to prejudice the meeting of the Estates."⁸ About the same time, Bismarck asked his secretary, Abeken, to draft a letter in which the King would personally request the Prince to leave.⁹ Without waiting for Austria's reply to the expulsion demand,¹⁰ Bismarck drew up a series of strong notes, which culminated in the accusation that Austria no longer valued the alliance with Prussia, but instead had allied with the majority in the Diet, with the political clubs in the Duchies, and with the Liberal opposition party in Berlin, for the purpose of forcing Augustenburg upon Prussia.¹¹ General Manteuffel was to be sent to Vienna to lend weight to the notes,¹² and "to leave no doubt that we do not fear a rupture; that we do not renounce our legitimate demands . . . ; and that to attain them we shall eventually seek and find elsewhere the support that Austria will not give us."¹³ If Franz Joseph backed down and accepted the February demands, or

⁸ May 3 and May 7 (*G. W. V.*, pp. 178 f., 182 f.). He had been hinting at such an act for a month (*G. W. V.*, p. 154; Jansen-Samwer p. 456; Karolyi to Mensdorff, April 11, letter).

⁹ The draft-letter, much corrected and supplemented by Bismarck, bears the following notations by Abeken: "Materialien zu einem Schreiben S. M. des Königs an d. Erbprinz von Augustenburg. B[erlin] 8/5 65." "Rein Concept S. M. vorgelegt." "Rein Concept mit d. einliegenden Zusatz am 26. Mai v. Hr. v. Bismarck wieder Sr. Majestät vorgelegt." (HAA).

¹⁰ In a note of May 11 (reaching Berlin May 13 or 14), Mensdorff politely refused to expel Augustenburg, "unless Prussia would agree not to use any influence herself upon the Estates." (This last clause suppressed by Sybel). Bismarck considered this a flat refusal (Instructions to Manteuffel, May 19, HAA).

¹¹ *G. W. V.*, pp. 184-189. A third note of the same date, May 12 (No. 176), is omitted by Thimme; in forcible terms, it rejected Mensdorff's suggestion that Prussia reduce her troops in order to lessen the financial burden on the Duchies, and declared that Prussia would look to her rights (AGEV).

¹² *G. W. V.*, p. 190. Manteuffel wanted to take Herwarth's place as commanding general in the Duchies (letter to Roon, March 14, 1865; Roon: *Denkwürdigkeiten* II, p. 321) and go to Vienna to receive the command of the Austrian troops.

¹³ Instructions for Manteuffel, May 19 (HAA; omitted from *G. W. V.*, though of much interest).

a money payment for his rights in the Duchies,¹⁴ well and good. If not, Austria's injustice would be patent, and Bismarck counted that Manteuffel (who disliked the thought of war)¹⁵ would be convinced, and would convince William, that there was no alternative but to draw the sword.

But the King could not make up his mind to the mission. He hesitated for two weeks and finally called a council to hear the advice of all his ministers, the Crown Prince, and the chief of staff.¹⁶ The majority of the ministers called for the February demands, or annexation at the cost of war, if necessary.¹⁷ Bismarck adroitly argued that though a reduction from the February demands could be considered a fair reward for Prussia's sacrifices, yet the public demanded annexation; a war with Austria was probably inevitable anyhow, and the present situation offered more favorable chances to Prussia, because of Austria's embarrassments.¹⁸ Moreover, a war would not only win the Duchies, but secure for Prussia the (long-desired) hegemony of North Germany. In spite of all these advantages, Bismarck put it squarely up to William to take the responsibility for the decision. The Crown Prince raised the bogey

¹⁴ Manteuffel was to offer only the payment of Austria's war expenses, but also to indemnify the other claimants (memorandum for Manteuffel, undated, HAA). This was Bismarck's reply to the Austrian memorandum of May 6 (see the preceding chapter).

¹⁵ Manteuffel's letter, to Bismarck, May 23 (*Bismarck-Jahrbuch* IV, p. 103 ff.)

¹⁶ Council of May 29 (see Appendix A, No. 8). Sybel (IV, p. 87 ff.) has dressed up the account of this meeting, but he interprets Bismarck's remarks more correctly than Thimme, who supports a contrary opinion with two small excerpts only (*G. W. V.*, p. 189 f.).

¹⁷ In private, Roon and Moltke were less inclined toward war than their remarks in the presence of Bismarck and the King would indicate. For Roon's attitude: letter to Bismarck, July 29 (HAA). For Moltke's attitude: letter to his brother, June 24 (*Moltke's gesammelte Schriften* IV, p. 180 f.), and unpublished letter to Manteuffel, July 2, 1865 (PGS).

¹⁸ He expressed the same idea to Max Duncker (Bernhardi VI, p. 202); and to Goltz in July (Goltz to William, August 20, 1865; Oncken: *Rheinpolitik* I, p. 60).

of a "civil war"¹⁹—and the King lost his nerve.²⁰ Bismarck's crisis had to be postponed until he could commit the King more deeply against Augustenburg. The royal letter was sent off to Kiel two days later.²¹

Meanwhile, distorted echoes of these events had been relayed to Vienna by Karolyi.²² On May 17, Werther had finally presented the accusing notes,²³ and a week later, Bismarck threatened to remove the *Erbprinz* by force even without Austria's consent.²⁴ These acts smelt of powder, and although Mensdorff saw through the Prussian tactics,²⁵ the fear began to spread in the *Ballplatz* that Bismarck might go too far. Would Prussia break the alliance simply because Austria asked some consideration for her own interests as well as Prussia's, Mensdorff inquired, in an able note of May 25?²⁶

To Franz Joseph and Count Esterhazy it was highly dis-

¹⁹ The Kronprinz later wrote, that though Austria was Prussia's sworn enemy, he did not consider Prussia's honor under the circumstances sufficiently affected to necessitate a war with all its consequences (letter to Bismarck, July 17, 1865 [HAA], printed in *Kaiser Friedrich III. Tagebücher von 1848-1866*, p. 535).

²⁰ He reserved his decision, but Bismarck had foreseen such a stalemate, and prepared for it. He suggested that Prussia should abstain from further attempts to come to an understanding with Austria, and await developments in silence. "Should events lead to a war with Austria, then not only the absorption of Schleswig-Holstein into the Prussian monarchy, but also a political [subordination] of the German secondary and small states to Prussia should be considered as the rewards of such a conflict." (Certified copy of protocol, HAA; printed in Appendix A, No. 8).

²¹ King William to Augustenburg, June 1 (Jansen-Samwer, p. 761 ff.).

²² Karolyi to Mensdorff, May 27, No. 35H; May 20, tg. No. 53; June 2, No. 37A, *Vertraulich*.

²³ Bismarck to Werther, May 16, tg. No. 184 (AGEV); Werther to Bismarck, May 18, No. 152 (HAA).

²⁴ *G. W. V.*, p. 202.

²⁵ See his estimate of Bismarck, in Vogt p. 66 f., and similar remarks in *Origines* VI, p. 245. Mensdorff said to Bloomfield: "When he has no other reason to object to a measure Bismarck puts forward the King's insuperable opposition." (Bloomfield to Russell, letter of May 11, F. O. 356 Bloomfield Papers 39). "Bismarck is full of subterfuges," said Mensdorff to Wydenbrug (Jansen-Samwer p. 456).

²⁶ To be shown to Bismarck (Mensdorff to Karolyi, May 25, *Reserviert*). It was not communicated until May 30.

tasteful that foreign relations should become acute just as a crisis was nearing within the Austrian cabinet. Unknown to all of his colleagues but Mensdorff, Esterhazy was preparing the way toward a compromise with the Magyars. Negotiations were proceeding with Count Belcredi, who was expected to replace Schmerling as *Staatsminister*.²⁷ On June 1, Belcredi submitted his conditions to the Emperor: a return to the federalism of the October diploma; heroic efforts to save money on the administration and the army; and suspension of the *Reichsrat* until a settlement was concluded with Hungary.²⁸ This obviously meant a serious *volte-face* in internal policy. Clearly there was a crying need to concentrate all forces on putting the Austrian house in order at once.

A telegram from Berlin threw the *Ballplatz* into deeper gloom. Count Karolyi reported an inauspicious conversation with Bismarck, from which he concluded that "Prussia [intends] to maintain her present policy and not allow a more reasonable view to prevail. . . . In this mood, which is growing worse, the visit of General Manteuffel to Vienna seems to have become less certain."²⁹ Since the *Hofburg* had looked upon the Manteuffel mission as a Prussian olive-branch, its abandonment seemed an evil omen. The meeting of the Es-

²⁷ But Esterhazy and Mensdorff did not think the change would come till autumn, so the latter told Lord Bloomfield (Bloomfield to Russell, letter of June 8, F. O. 356 Bloomfield Papers 39). For the negotiations with Belcredi, see Hugo Traub: "Aus dem Leben und Wirken des Grafen Richard Belcredi," in *Oesterreich, Zeitschrift für Geschichte* I, 1918, Heft 4, pp. 290-292.

²⁸ Belcredi's memorandum for the Emperor, Prague, June 1, 1865 (*Kabinettsarchiv* HHS). Other conditions: the war-minister to be one whom Belcredi could trust to carry out economies with iron determination; the police-ministry to be made a section of the *Staatsministerium*; more importance to be given to the presidency of the minister-council, for which position Belcredi tactfully suggested Esterhazy; the resignation of all the members of the present cabinet, but Mensdorff and Esterhazy; and certain changes in the position of the *Staatsrat*, and in relations with Hungary (Traub, *loc. cit.* p. 292 note 4, dates this later).

²⁹ Karolyi to Mensdorff, May 30, tg. No. 53: Bismarck had said that, "in view of their radically different interests, an accord would hardly be attainable [and] the dual regime would have to be continued indefinitely."

tates of Schleswig-Holstein loomed like a thunder-cloud on the horizon;³⁰ Bismarck had reopened commercial negotiations with Austria's bitterest foe, Italy, and was pressing the *Mittelstaaten* to follow;³¹ Pfordten and others had long been advising Austria to meet Bismarck half-way;³² and Augustenburg was willing to make an abject compromise with Prussia.³³

Under these circumstances, Franz Joseph decided to wait no longer for Prussia, but to make a direct and definite offer to Berlin in the hope of arriving at a settlement in time for ratification at the projected meeting with the King at Karlsbad or Gastein.³⁴ If Bismarck proved refractory, William might be won over by a strong personal appeal.³⁵ The exchange of notes, which Austria began on June 5, has been sufficiently described by others.³⁶ The greatest obstacle fell to the ground when Bismarck finally agreed to settle the military terms with the Diet.³⁷ Since Mensdorff replied by allowing Prussia to settle the naval terms with the future Duke,³⁸ the opposing views had come so close together by July 10 that an agreement upon the Prussian conditions seemed assured.

³⁰ Though the Estates could not meet until autumn, because of the necessity of filling vacancies by new elections, yet it became certain that their first act would be a lively declaration for Augustenburg. Bismarck threatened to treat such an act as high treason and use force against the offenders and proclaim martial law (Karolyi to Mensdorff, May 13, No. 31E, *Vertraulich*). —It was this inevitable clash that the *Ballplatz* dreaded. Mensdorff expressed this feeling in the note of June 5 (HHS; Sybel IV, p. 96). Bismarck expected his crisis to intervene and prevent the Estates from meeting ("Die ganze Geschichte werde wahrscheinlich im Sande verlaufen," he told Scheel-Plessen: Tiedemann I, p. 425).

³¹ *G. W. V.*, pp. 204 f., 212 f.

³² Blome to Mensdorff, April 15, No. 24A; Pfordten to Bray, April 29, No. 112 (copy in HHS).

³³ Jansen-Samwer pp. 753-756.

³⁴ This had been suggested by Karolyi as early as May 13, both in Berlin and Vienna (Karolyi to Mensdorff, May 13, No. 31E *Vertraulich*).

³⁵ *Origines* VI, p. 282 ff.

³⁶ Austrian note of June 5; Prussian note of June 16; Austrian memorandum of June 24, given to Werther to take to the King at Karlsbad (Sybel IV, p. 96 ff.; Stern IX, pp. 410, 412 ff.).

³⁷ Note of July 3 (*G. W. V.*, p. 219 ff.).

³⁸ Mensdorff to Werther, July 10, No. a.

But what Bismarck gave with one hand, he took back with the other. He persuaded the King to appeal directly to Franz Joseph for the expulsion of the *Erbprinz*,³⁹ and he conditioned his new concessions upon the installation of the Grand Duke of Oldenburg in the Duchies.⁴⁰ This was a truly Machiavelian combination. Bismarck based his demand for the exclusion of the Augustenburger largely upon the ground that the claimant exercised a prejudicial influence upon the inhabitants before the meeting of the *Landtag*,⁴¹ yet the minister-president was continuing his own propaganda in the Duchies, and subventioning agents specifically for the purpose of swaying the voters in the approaching elections.⁴² And while Bismarck proposed the installation of the Grand Duke as a surer guarantee of stable government in Kiel,⁴³ he (Bismarck) had in his pocket tentative agreements with that personage by which the latter would either sell his claims to Prussia, or if actually installed, would later abdicate and sell his sovereignty at a

³⁹ King William to Franz Joseph, letter of June 30 (HHS; excerpts in Sybel IV, p. 106 and G. W. V, p. 224): ". . . If you could decide to effect [Augustenburg's] removal with my help, then a quiet evolution in the Duchies would be made possible. . . ." wrote the King, expecting Franz Joseph graciously to clear the way for Prussia.

⁴⁰ G. W. V, p. 219 ff.

⁴¹ G. W. V, p. 182.

⁴² This may be traced in the following documents: Rössler to Richthofen, Hamburg, May 28, 1865; Richthofen to Bismarck, May 29, No. 53; Bismarck to Richthofen, June 5, No. 44 *Vertraulich*; Richthofen to Bismarck, June 18, No. 56; Bismarck to Richthofen, June 23, No. 55 *Vertraulich*; Richthofen to Bismarck, June 28, No. 62: ". . . (Ich) halte es für geeignet, erst zu der Zeit, wo die Wählerlisten ausliegen, die Einwirkung auf die Wähler wo sie ausführbar ist, versuchen zu lassen." Meanwhile he will limit himself to a "vorsichtige Benützung der Presse." He has already arranged for free copies of pro-Prussian newspapers to be placed where they may have a good effect. Bismarck replied, expressing his "Einverständniss mit dem darin enthaltenen Bemerkungen. . . . In Betreff der Zahlung für den H. Erichsen darf ich voraussetzen, dass Sie inzwischen meinen Anordnungen gemäss von Berlin aus mit dem gewünschten Credit versehen sein werden. Die Anstellung des Advocaten Römer würde selbstverständlich sehr erwünscht sein. . . ." (Bismarck to Richthofen, Karlsbad, July 1, No. 2 *Vertraulich*. All documents in PGS. No trace of this correspondence in Sybel or G. W. V).

⁴³ G. W. V, p. 220.

higher figure,⁴⁴ for Grand Duke Peter had at last realized that as sovereign of the Duchies he would have no peace.⁴⁵ In order not to make the trick too obvious, the inevitable outbreaks of the incensed population might constitute the occasion for the abdication and Prussian intervention. Thus Oldenburg was not only the "little breach-gun against Augustenburg" but since May had become, at the touch of the magician, a prospective "bridge to Prussia's annexation of the lands of the lower Elbe."⁴⁶ It seems a fair conclusion that in this dispatch of July 3 Bismarck was preparing for Austria a line of retreat which she might take in order to escape war.⁴⁷

Meanwhile in Vienna, Oldenburg's stock had touched bottom. Though in private conversations, the Emperor and Mensdorff and Karolyi had always indicated that the Grand Duke's claims would be given consideration,⁴⁸ they became less disposed to do so when they learned in June that Bismarck had come to some sort of arrangement with him.⁴⁹ Moreover,

⁴⁴ Draft-treaties and other documents relative to these negotiations are found in a packet labelled "Geheime Verhandlungen mit dem Grossherz. Oldenburgischen Minister v. Rössing in Karlsbad." (HAA). The negotiations were begun in Berlin about June 1, 1865, between Bismarck and the Grand Duke himself, and continued in Karlsbad (cf. *G. W. V.*, p. 353; *Kaiser Friedrich III. Tagebucher von 1848-1866* p. 391). No study of the Grand Duke's policy has yet been made from the archival material, except the summary in Lange: *Bismarck und die norddeutschen Kleinstaaten im Jahre 1866* pp. 58-62. Of older studies, the best are those of Hermann Oncken in *Preussische Jahrbücher* CII, 1900, pp. 464-509 (reprinted in his *Historisch-politische Aufsätze* II, pp. 35-93) and in *Jahrbuch für Geschichte des Herzogtums Oldenburg* XI, 1902.

⁴⁵ Grand Duke Peter of Oldenburg to Emperor Alexander II of Russia, letter, Oldenburg, May 20, 1865 (copy in HAA).

⁴⁶ So said Bismarck (*Origines* VII, p. 14).

⁴⁷ Otherwise, why would he have drafted an installation-abdication agreement, when the Grand Duke himself really preferred simply to *sell his claims*? (Cf. Oldenburg documents, HAA).

⁴⁸ Sybel IV, p. 25; Karolyi to Mensdorff, letter of March 31; Mensdorff to Karolyi, June 5; Werther to Bismarck, June 15, No. 177 (HAA). But Bismarck's statements (*G. W. V.*, pp. 104, 111) were exaggerated.

⁴⁹ Karolyi to Mensdorff, June 7, tg. No. 54; Metternich to Mertsdorff, June 10, No. 30A (information from Drouyn). Mensdorff resented these secret negotiations (*Origines* VI, p. 293 ff.). Chotek was sent to ask Bis-

public opinion in Austria, though indifferent in January, was now exercised in favor of Augustenburg.⁵⁰ The great *crescendo* of the Augustenburg movement and the intensity of feeling against Oldenburg in the Duchies convinced even the most conservative Austrians that Grand Duke Peter could be kept on the throne only with the aid of Prussian bayonets.⁵¹ The *Ballplatz* after a year of witnessing Bismarck's dilatory tactics, could not repress the suspicion that this new proposal fell into the same category, and that Bismarck would later raise the same hue and cry against Oldenburg as now against Augustenburg.⁵²

The *Ballplatz* made heroic efforts to nip this new *démarche* in the bud, and clinch the final settlement at last. The Austrian official reply, one of Biegeleben's most temperate and judicious compositions, asked whether William would *guarantee* to install and maintain Oldenburg.⁵³ It met the Prussian objections to Augustenburg, expressed the greatest satisfaction

marck whether an agreement had been concluded (Mensdorff to Chotek, June 17) but received an evasive reply (Chotek to Mensdorff, June 22, No. 44B).

⁵⁰ *Origines* VI, p. 295: Brintz' interpellation in the *Reichsrat*.

⁵¹ For instance, Count Blome, an opponent of Augustenburg, now became convinced that Oldenburg was impossible (Blome to Mensdorff, letter of June 6).

⁵² Werther to Bismarck, July 5, No. 204 (HAA): The Kaiser and he were ready, Mensdorff said, to close the question with all possible advantages to Prussia, but it must be in such a way that Austria would not come out with dishonor. "Once we are out of the Duchies," he added, "Prussia can do with them whatever she likes."

⁵³ Mensdorff to Werther, July 10, No. a (HHS; partially printed in Hassell: *Geschichte des Königreichs Hannover* II-2, p. 256; *G. W.* V, p. 234; and Wertheimer: *Bismarck im politischen Kampf* pp. 151-153). Its conciliatory tone may be seen from the opening passage: "We began negotiations on the special advantages to be granted to Prussia, because Prussia undertook heavier burdens than we in the war fought side by side, because her geographical position gives her a greater interest in the future of the Duchies, and because we desire her to consider our alliance advantageous not only by reason of the aid we gave, but also in its results. On the other hand, we have our own position in the German Confederation to preserve against any diminution. These points of view are certainly worthy of the alliance of the two German powers. . . ."

over Bismarck's offer in the military question, made new concessions, and listed the points of agreement which could now be embodied in a treaty between Prussia and Austria and the future sovereign.⁵⁴ To smooth out the last difficulties, Mensdorff offered to send a confidential envoy to confer directly with the King and Bismarck.⁵⁵ As a friendly gesture, the Emperor expressed his pleasure in entrusting his troops in the Duchies to General Manteuffel, whose appointment had finally been announced.⁵⁶ But in replying at the same time to William's personal letter, Franz Joseph could not agree to expel the *Erbprinz*, though he said that he would not regret his voluntary departure. Busy as the Emperor was with the cabinet crisis, he promised to meet William in Gastein.⁵⁷ Simultaneously, Mensdorff acted to quell the polemics in the subventioned Paris press, and to prevent any untoward incident in the Duchies, of which Bismarck might be tempted to take advantage.⁵⁸ All these efforts came too late, for Bismarck was prepared at last to bring matters to a sharp crisis.

By much manoeuvring and some luck, King William had finally been brought to the point where he was ready to draw the sword, if need be. Augustenburg's polite but firm refusal to leave the Duchies,⁵⁹ which Bismarck called an insult to the King;⁶⁰ the report of the crown lawyers, which denied the

⁵⁴ This idea is in an inspired article in *Allgemeine Zeitung*, No. 206, Vienna July 22, "Abends."

⁵⁵ Mensdorff to Werther, letter of July 10. Cf. *G. W. V.*, p. 234.

⁵⁶ Mensdorff to Werther, July 10, No. b. Semi-officially, the *Ballplatz* had threatened to withdraw the troops from the Prussian supreme command, as a protest against General Herwarth's severity toward the inhabitants.

⁵⁷ Franz Joseph to William, Laxenburg, July 9 (draft in HHS, original in HAA).

⁵⁸ Mensdorff to Metternich, July 11; Mensdorff to Halbhüser, July 10: If the Augustenburgers started "provocative demonstrations," Halbhüser was "to oppose them at first by the most definite warning, and then if necessary by force." This was a tone which the foreign office had not used to its *Commissar* before.

⁵⁹ Letter to William, June 16 (Jansen-Samwer p. 765 f.).

⁶⁰ Chotek to Mensdorff, June 22, No. 44A: Bismarck uttered a furious tirade against the Prince, and said that if he had quietly left the Duchies, William's natural inclination toward him would have finally secured his adoption by

Augustenburg claims any validity;⁶¹ the removal of the court to Karlsbad, where William was free from the influence of the Queen and Crown Prince; the continual reports of the Augustenburg agitation, culminating in the celebration of the Prince's birthday;⁶² all strengthened William's determination and increased his rage against the Prince and his protectors.

To be sure, General Manteuffel warned him against war with Austria, for Manteuffel wished to strengthen the Austro-Prussian alliance as a bulwark against France.⁶³ The general felt that Bismarck had not raised an issue that would carry public opinion into a war. Unfortunately for Bismarck and his policy, the removal of Manteuffel from the King's entourage, while officially sanctioned, had not yet been carried out.⁶⁴ With Generals Alvensleben and Tresckow, he attended the King at Karlsbad and Gastein, and was constantly on the alert for a basis of compromise with Austria.⁶⁵ Since Manteuffel's

Prussia. When Chotek at once suggested that Mensdorff could advise the Prince to move his residence, Bismarck declared that it was now too late — the King was too deeply insulted! Bismarck also thought of bringing Augustenburg to trial *in contumaciam* against his sovereign (*Ibid*)

⁶¹ Sybel IV, p. 101 ff.; Jansen-Samwer p. 478 ff. Oldenburg hardly fared better.

⁶² Great demonstrations had been arranged for July 6, but were voluntarily called off on Halbhüser's advice, so that the day passed very quietly. Zedlitz' report was disappointing, but he and Herwarth noted that many deputations went to call on the Prince, that many houses (including Halbhüser's) were decorated, and that the Kiel University publicly celebrated the natal day of "His Highness, Frederick VIII." Two days later, Zedlitz discovered that the Austrian military band had serenaded the Prince, and he wrote in haste to Bismarck, who gravely forwarded this complaint to Vienna, evidently considering it heresy even to "say it with music."

⁶³ The influence of Manteuffel and the rest of the military *camarilla* is best analyzed by Fritz Hartung: "Verantwortliche Regierung, Kabinette, und Nebenregierungen im konstitutionellen Preussen 1848-1918," in *Forschungen zur brandenburgischen und preussischen Geschichte* XLIV, 1931, p. 30. The almost pivotal importance of Manteuffel during the Gastein negotiations is pointed out by A. von Ruville: "Bismarck und die gross-deutsche Gedanke," in the same *Forschungen* XVI, 1903, p. 435 ff.

⁶⁴ One of Bismarck's first acts on assuming the ministry in 1862 was an unsuccessful attempt to render Manteuffel harmless by sending him to an embassy abroad (Hartung, *loc. cit.* p. 32).

⁶⁵ He remained in friendly semi-official correspondence with the Emperor's adjutant, General Crenneville (letters in KAV: *Militärkanzlei*).

influence was so strong, and his ideals corresponded more closely than Bismarck's to the King's fundamental predilections,⁶⁶ the minister-president was unable still to count on William *à toute épreuve*. Nevertheless, by the failure of the direct appeal to Franz Joseph, the King's personal honor had become deeply engaged. The situation was therefore ripe, as it had not been in May, for strong words backed by force.

On July 11, without waiting for Franz Joseph's reply to the letter and the Oldenburg note,⁶⁷ Bismarck hurled six thunderbolts at Vienna.⁶⁸ In more threatening tones than he had heretofore used, Bismarck demanded the wholesale subjection of the press, the political associations, the *Landesregierung*, the suppression of all Augustenburg demonstrations, the ruthless punishment of culpable officials and the professors of the University of Kiel. "If cooperation is refused, . . . an eventuality which we hope will not arise, then we must take the necessary measures and carry them out at all costs."⁶⁹ In these notes, Bismarck struck again the ultimatum-chord that he had sounded in May, but now it swelled with the volume of the full organ. Again he was ready to send General Manteuffel to Vienna.⁷⁰ Simultaneously, reports of military preparations were allowed to appear in the press,⁷¹ and reservists were called for munitions work with a certain "ostensible secrecy."⁷² To the Duke of Gramont, who he knew would repeat his words both in Vienna and Paris, Bismarck launched

⁶⁶ For Manteuffel's political ideals, see especially Ludwig Dehio: "Edwin von Manteuffel's Politische Ideen," in *Historische Zeitschrift* CXXXI, 1925, pp. 41-71.

⁶⁷ Bismarck kept in touch with Werther and timed these notes of July 11 to cross with Mensdorff's and the Emperor's expected replies (Werther to Bismarck, July 8, tg. No. 209; July 11, tg. No. 218 [AGEV]).

⁶⁸ Bismarck to Werther, July 11, Nos. 14, 15, 16, 17, 19, 20 (copies in HHS; the first four in *G. W. V.*, p. 227 ff.).

⁶⁹ *G. W. V.*, p. 233.

⁷⁰ *Allgemeine Zeitung*, No. 188, article dated Berlin, July 5, 1865. Cf. *Origines* VI, p. 328.

⁷¹ *Allgemeine Zeitung*, No. 197, article dated Berlin July 14. Bismarck instigated this publicity (*G. W. V.*, p. 225).

⁷² *G. W. V.*, p. 226.

into stormy invectives against Austria. The alliance, he said, had been from the beginning a millstone of which every Prussian was anxious to be rid.⁷³ In the newspapers throughout Germany, Bismarck was said to have exclaimed, "I want war with Austria."⁷⁴

A further stream of complaints,⁷⁵ and another firm note on July 21,⁷⁶ served to keep the situation tense, while the King proceeded from Karlsbad to Regensburg, where he held another council,⁷⁷ and then to Gastein. In a word, the Prussian minister had set all the machinery in motion to go to war if Austria did not give way.⁷⁸

The stroke could hardly have been timed more unfortunately for the Danube monarchy, for the long-expected ministerial crisis was at its height.⁷⁹ In June, the Emperor had gone to

⁷³ The King, he said, refused to be treated like an Elector of Brandenburg (*Origines* VI, p. 324 ff.; Hassel: *Albert von Sachsen* II, p. 207). Mensdorff complained to Werther about these provocative utterances on Austrian soil. The envoy, embarrassed, mumbled that Mensdorff must know Bismarck's habit of saying more than he really meant! (Vogt p. 70).

⁷⁴ Sybel IV, p. 108 note 1. Goltz was convinced that Bismarck wanted war (A. Dorn: *Robert Heinrich Graf von der Goltz*, p. 199 note; Oncken I, p. 60).

⁷⁵ Bismarck to Werther, July 14, No. 23, No. 24; July 17, No. 25; July 21, No. 28 (AGEV).

⁷⁶ Bismarck to Werther, Regensburg, July 21, No. 26 (*G. W. V.*, p. 238 f.). As Thimme correctly shows (*Ibid.* p. 237), this note was not an "ultimatum." Hence Sybel (IV, p. 112), Stern (IX, p. 413), Brandenburg (*Untersuchungen* p. 430), and all other accounts need correction, as do further remarks of Thimme (pp. 237-238). The less threatening tone of this note was due solely to the Emperor's readiness to parley, not to a desire to treat the new conservative government of Austria more leniently than the Schmerling regime. Else why had Bismarck sent his ultimatum of July 11, and why did he continue with his war threats until Blome reached Gastein?

⁷⁷ Sybel IV, p. 110 f. Goltz was called to the council, but Werther did not attend (correct Sybel on this). Werther met Bismarck at Salzburg on July 22 (Werther to Bismarck, July 21, tg. No. 228, AGEV) and returned to Vienna late on July 24.

⁷⁸ *G. W. V.*, pp. 224 ff., 240; Sybel IV, p. 111; Stern IX, p. 587; *Origines* VI, p. 298.

⁷⁹ For the internal upheaval at this time, see Redlich: *Das oesterreichische Staats- und Reichsproblem* II, p. 396 ff.; Friedjung I, p. 132 ff. (criticized by Redlich II, p. 769); Stern IX, pp. 415-418; Sybel IV, p. 116 ff.; Traub, *loc. cit.*, p. 292; Fröbel II, p. 377.

Budapest, met Deák, and received an ovation. On his return to Vienna, he abruptly appointed a new Hungarian chancellor to the cabinet and precipitated the resignation of Schmerling and his followers. At the same time, the *Reichsrat* had begun a terrific assault on the budget, cutting the administration's estimates to the bone. Army and navy had to be reduced at this most crucial moment. During July, the heaviest burden fell upon the shoulders of poor Mensdorff, who had been appointed president of the council until the new ministry under Count Belcredi (whose conditions Franz Joseph had accepted) could be formed, and the *Reichsrat* closed. Mensdorff's time was so consumed with the building of the ministry and its platform, that the affairs of his own department were left largely to the tender care of Meysenbug and Biegeleben.⁸⁰

In spite of these governmental difficulties and Bismarck's provocations, Franz Joseph kept his temper. His hard pressed minister made a serious effort to meet the more reasonable of the Prussian complaints.⁸¹ He sent Bismarck's sheaf of charges to Halbhuber, asked him to examine them carefully and draw up a report upon which an accurate judgment could be based.⁸² He recommended that the *Landesregierung* be censured for the Kiel University affair, ordered the press laws to be enforced to the fullest extent against insults to Prussia,⁸³

⁸⁰ Bloomfield to Russell, letter of June 22 (F. O. 356 Bloomfield Papers 39); Werther to Bismarck, July 11, tg. No. 219 (AGEV). Mensdorff did not hold his regular conferences with the foreign envoys for weeks (*Allgemeine Zeitung*, No. 209, Vienna July 26).

⁸¹ Sybel and Thimme contemptuously dismiss Mensdorff's efforts to satisfy Bismarck — Just before the Prussian notes of July 11 arrived, the minister had offered to restrict the *Landesregierung* to its lawful, non-political functions, and to consider Prussian proposals for further limitation of its authority (Mensdorff to Chotek, July 11).

⁸² Mensdorff to Halbhuber, July 16, No. 1: ". . . Individual acts appear to have overstepped the line which Austria had marked out, and cannot be condoned, such as the homage of Kiel University to Duke Friedrich VIII. . ." It was inadmissible, he wrote, for the Prince to be treated as already reigning, or to receive the symbols and attributes of sovereignty. Nevertheless, the direction of Austrian policy remained unchanged.

⁸³ Mensdorff to Halbhuber, July 16, No. 1.

and besought his agent to preserve a calm and restrained demeanor.⁸⁴ Franz Joseph was ready to punish actual violations of the laws but not to undertake wholesale dragonnades. He intended to maintain his hold upon his pawn until Prussia traded something substantial for it.

On July 19, Mensdorff informed the Prussians of these efforts to meet their complaints, asked again for constructive suggestions, and begged them earnestly not to allow accidents to spoil this opportunity for a final settlement.⁸⁵ The sooner an agreement was reached on the master problem, he declared, the sooner the agitation in the Duchies would cease.⁸⁶

In spite of Bismarck's thunders, the *Ballplatz* could not believe that he really meant to provoke war.⁸⁷ He had not broken off relations after the ultimatum of July 11, but had expressed his readiness to confer with a confidential envoy from Austria.⁸⁸ As Karolyi was in Paris, Mensdorff had summoned Count Blome,⁸⁹ *persona grata* to Esterhazy,⁹⁰ resourceful, fluent in argument, and eager to win his spurs.⁹¹ Blome

⁸⁴ Mensdorff to Halbhüser, July 16, No. 2.

⁸⁵ Mensdorff to Werther, July 19 [No. 2], unfairly summarized by Sybel IV, p. 110 and Thimme, *G. W. V.*, p. 237.

⁸⁶ Mensdorff to Werther [No. 1].

⁸⁷ Mensdorff to Halbhüser, July 16, No. 1; Bloomfield to Russell, July 25, No. 136 Confidential (F. O. 7 Austria 685); Vogt p. 68. Count Chotek wrote from Berlin, that Bismarck's talk about "an imminent war with Austria" and raising money for war materials was laughed at by all sensible persons! (Chotek to Mensdorff, letter of June 23).

⁸⁸ Bismarck to Werther, July 12, tg. No. 21 (AGEV). Moreover, Bismarck no longer categorically demanded the expulsion of Augustenburg.

⁸⁹ Mensdorff told Werther: ". . . Graf Karolyi wird aus Frankreich Ende des Monats hier eintreffen und könnte event[uel] der im gestrigen Privatbrief berührte Vertrauensmann sein, sonst würde man dazu an Graf Blome, der nicht augustenburgisch, denken wenn wir überhaupt auf die Idee eingehen." (Werther to Bismarck, July 11, tg. No. 219, AGEV). Bismarck left the choice to Austria. Blome had just started on his vacation at Lindau (Werther to Bismarck, July 16, tg. No. 223, AGEV).

⁹⁰ Belcredi: "Fragmente aus dem Nachlasse," in *Die Kultur* 1906, p. 18.

⁹¹ So Mensdorff told Edelsheim (Edelsheim to Roggenbach, July 30, No. 133 Vertraulich, BGL). On the reasons for calling Blome instead of Karolyi, Wertheimer (p. 157) rightly corrects Stern.

waited a day at Munich to confer with Pfordten,⁹² before proceeding to Vienna to take the orders of the Emperor, Mensdorff, and Esterhazy, and to hold himself in readiness to go to Gastein.⁹³

Blome encountered a variety of opinions in Vienna. Franz Joseph himself was extremely pacific,—he would accept any solution, any compromise, which did not touch his "honor."⁹⁴ On the other hand, Meysenbug and Biegeleben resented the position into which Bismarck's determination and Austria's weakness were pushing the monarchy. The undersecretary felt confident of French aid in case of war, and the *Referent* saw no other alternative but to fight Prussia.⁹⁵ Biegeleben refused flatly to become a party to any agreement which was not based upon the installation of Augustenburg as sovereign of Schleswig-Holstein.⁹⁶ Mensdorff himself was deeply incensed at the Prussian threats and was ready to take a firm tone.⁹⁷ Yet his sovereign stayed his hand from precipitate action. Knowing that Prussia was prepared to seize the Prince of Augustenburg,⁹⁸ Mensdorff nevertheless declined Beust's suggestion to place the candidate under the protection of the

⁹² Blome to Mensdorff, Munich, July 17, tg.

⁹³ Werther to Bismarck, July 19, tg. No. 227 (AGEV).

⁹⁴ Werther to Bismarck, July 5, No. 204 (HAA); Blome to Mensdorff, August 14 (Appendix A, No. 9)

⁹⁵ Vogt p. 68, note 2; R. von Biegeleben: *Ludwig Freiherr von Biegeleben*, p. 293.

⁹⁶ So Blome told Wollheim da Fonseca (*Neue Indiscretionen* I, p. 290 f.). Biegeleben was agitating for a hard and fast agreement (in case the *provisorium* were continued) to protect Austria from Bismarck's perpetual complaints. He desired an alternation in the high command, and an equal number of troops with Prussia. He seems also to have urged the formation of a separate chancellery for Schleswig-Holstein (Inspired article in *Allgemeine Zeitung*, No. 202, Vienna July 19).

⁹⁷ Bloomfield to Russell, July 25, No. 136 Confidential (F. O. 7 Austria 685); Werther to Bismarck, July 21, tg. No. 228 (AGEV). Mensdorff's determined attitude was the natural result of his observation of Bismarck's hostile policy, as well as the arguments of his advisors and of his Coburg relatives. Early in July, Queen Victoria had besought him to resist Prussia's land-hunger (Vogt p. 66; *Origines* VI, p. 293).

⁹⁸ This news had appeared in the papers inspired by the *Wilhelmstrasse* (cf. *Allgemeine Zeitung*, No. 202, Berlin July 18).

Austrian troops.⁹⁹ "Austria will neither yield nor provoke," he told Gramont.¹⁰⁰ The *mot d'ordre* was: calmness in the face of Prussia's blustering affronts.¹⁰¹

On July 24, Werther returned from his conference with Bismarck in Salzburg, to find Mensdorff worked up over the Regensburg note,¹⁰² because it appeared to cancel Blome's mission. The Prussian envoy hastened to correct this impression¹⁰³ and obtained from Bismarck the assurance that Blome's presence was still desired "to negotiate upon the consequences of the Regensburg dispatch."¹⁰⁴ The day before, a breathless counsel had reached the *Ballplatz* from Baron von der Pfordten, who had come under the magic spell of Bismarck's personality at Salzburg.¹⁰⁵ The gist of his advice was that Austria should seek to conciliate William at once by real concessions, and a humble apology from the Duke of Augustenburg.¹⁰⁶

That Bismarck's threats were serious became more apparent when the Austrian telegraph bureau intercepted and decoded

⁹⁹ *Origines* VI, pp. 343, 376. When Halbhüser asked what he should do if Augustenburg were arrested, Mensdorff wired back, "Telegraph the facts at once and await instructions." (Halbhüser to Mensdorff, and Mensdorff to Halbhüser, tgs. of July 28). When Lord Bloomfield asked what Austria would do if the Prince took refuge with the Austrian brigade, Mensdorff said that he would be protected, but he trusted that it would not happen (Bloomfield to Russell, July 26, No. 138 Confidential, F. O. 7 Austria 685).

¹⁰⁰ *Origines* VI, p. 344 f.

¹⁰¹ *Origines* VI, p. 324; Mensdorff to Halbhüser, July 26; inspired article in *Allgemeine Zeitung*, No. 207, Vienna July 24.

¹⁰² Sybel's "ultimatum" of July 21 (see above). The Prussian chargé had presented it to undersecretary Meysenbug on July 22, for Mensdorff was too busy to receive him (Galen to Bismarck, July 22, No. 229, AGEV).

¹⁰³ Werther to Bismarck, July 26, No. 239 (AGEV).

¹⁰⁴ Werther to Bismarck, July 25, tg. No. 235; Bismarck to Werther, Gastein, July 25, tg. No. 30 (AGEV).

¹⁰⁵ The famous interview of July 23, in which Bismarck tried to keep Pfordten from joining Austria.

¹⁰⁶ Presumably on the lines of Pfordten's letter to Samwer, July 24 (Jansen-Samwer p. 733 ff.), and Zwierzina to Mensdorff, Munich, July 24, No. 43. For Pfordten's *démarche* in Vienna: Mensdorff to Zwierzina (chargé at Munich), July 29, No. 1; Bloomfield to Russell, July 25, No. 136 Confidential (F. O. 7 Austria 685); Friesen: *Erinnerungen* II, p. 122.

Prussian messages¹⁰⁷ revealing that funds for a year's campaign were being provided in Berlin, that General Herwarth had instructions to take action as soon as William left Austrian soil,¹⁰⁸ and — worst of all — that Bismarck was trying to induce Italy to join him in war.¹⁰⁹ On top of this came the news from Halbhuber that Zedlitz had arrested the editor of the principal Augustenburg newspaper, and another Prussian.¹¹⁰ The Austrian press shouted for action, and the public, unmindful of the financial chaos, seemed ready to accept Prussia's challenge. The outlook for Blome's mission of peace rapidly grew darker.¹¹¹

Before escorting the envoy to Gastein, let us examine his instructions, for there is still much confusion among historians as to the proposals that he was empowered to make to the Prussians. In point of fact, no written instructions were given to him, but he knew the Emperor's wishes and the predilections of Esterhazy, Mensdorff, and Biegeleben so well,

¹⁰⁷ Austria possessed not only the cipher in use between Berlin and *Florence* (as Oncken: *Rheinpolitik* I, p. 48 note 1, states) but others as well, so that the *Ballplatz* caught about two-thirds of all wires sent and received by Bismarck between July 23 and August 16. The result of these unsuspected (?) glimpses into Bismarck's diplomatic laboratory was not favorable to Prussia, for the negotiations with Italy angered the Emperor more than it frightened him, and Italy's hesitation encouraged the *Ballplatz* (cf. R. von Biegeleben p. 294).

¹⁰⁸ Bismarck's tg. to the *Kronprinz*, July 23 (*G. W. V.*, p. 240).

¹⁰⁹ Bismarck's tg. to Usedom, July 26 (*G. W. V.*, p. 242).

¹¹⁰ Halbhuber to Mensdorff, July 25, tg. received 9 05 p. m., and three tgs. on July 26. While these arrests were taking place, Werther was requesting Mensdorff's approval to make them! Mensdorff laughingly noticed that the precedent of arresting Prussian citizens might be applied to Augustenburg (Werther to Bismarck, July 25, tg. No. 235, AGEV).

¹¹¹ A Prussian military officer was caught taking plans of the fortress at Olmütz, and Roon himself "had gone home [from the Regensburg council] . . . by way of Prague, from whence he had been taking observations and making notes of the military positions at Reichenberg and other places. These proceedings," Mensdorff told Bloomfield, "were no doubt meant to intimidate. . . ." (Bloomfield to Russell, July 25, No. 136 Confidential. *F. O.* 7 Austria 685).

that he needed no formal and binding orders,¹¹² the more so because he was not expected to *conclude* an agreement. By his own confession, he was sent "to find out exactly whether Prussia, as seemed likely, was actually determined upon extreme measures, or whether there was a possibility of regulating the controversy in harmony with the federal pact."¹¹³ By another version, he was "to find a way out" of the impasse.¹¹⁴

Strange to say, Blome revealed his strategy to Werther the day before he left.¹¹⁵ He intended to reject Oldenburg utterly,¹¹⁶ to say nothing about territorial compensations,¹¹⁷ but to press for Augustenburg to the utmost, even promising an apology by the Prince if necessary.¹¹⁸ If all arguments failed, he thought of discussing "a continuation of the *provisorium* under new regulations."¹¹⁹ From a chance remark of Hofmann, a clever and ambitious *Hofrat* in the foreign ministry, and possibly from Moriz Esterhazy, Blome picked up a novel idea for a compromise: the division of the Duchies between Austria and Prussia for administrative purposes only, Austria

¹¹² Inspired article in *Allgemeine Zeitung*, No. 213, Vienna, July 30, 1865. Mensdorff told Lord Bloomfield that one of Blome's objects was "to induce M. de Bismarck to desist from his project of forcing the Prince of Augustenburg to quit the Duchies . . . Count Blome is instructed to try and pacify the King but to hold out no expectation that important concessions are to be expected from Vienna. . . ." (Bloomfield to Russell, July 26, No. 138 Confidential. F. O. 7 Austria 685). This shows a leaning toward the Biegeleben attitude

¹¹³ Blome to Mensdorff, August 14, No. 2 (Appendix A, No. 9).

¹¹⁴ Article inspired by Blome, in *Allgemeine Zeitung* May 8, 1868, No. 129, *Ausserordentliche Beilage*. The same idea was expressed in Mensdorff's letter to Bismarck, July 26, 1865, and Mensdorff's remarks to the envoy of Baden (Edelsheim to Roggenbach, July 30, No. 133 *Vertraulich*, BGL).

¹¹⁵ And Werther wrote it to Bismarck (July 26, No. 239, AGEV).

¹¹⁶ Because the Grand Duke could be kept on the throne of the Duchies only by Prussian bayonets (*Ibid.*)

¹¹⁷ Blome "considered them impractical under the present circumstances and inclinations." (*Ibid.*)

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁹ "Bei Graf Blome . . . schwebte auch der Gedanke vor, dass . . . Verlängerung des Provisoriums unter neuen Bestimmungen zur Erörterung kommen könne." (*Ibid.*)

to have control in Holstein, Prussia in Schleswig, but both to keep the combined ownership of both Duchies.¹²⁰ This notable concession, a last resort to prevent war, was kept secret from Biegeleben and his associates.¹²¹ It was agreed that Blome should not correspond with the *Ballplatz* unless he found Bismarck more conciliatory, but should return after three or four days with results of a positive or negative character, which he would report in person to the Emperor.¹²²

In a last interview with Blome, Franz Joseph showed that "he was ready to make almost any sacrifice rather than seriously imperil the Relations of the two countries."¹²³ He would let it come to a rupture only if no honorable solution could be found, he said.¹²⁴ Blome was therefore not without hope.

¹²⁰ For Hofmann's remark, see R. von Biegeleben: *Ludwig Freiherr von Biegeleben* p. 294. Esterhazy championed the idea in the council a few days later (see chapter viii). Both Hofmann and Esterhazy may have gotten the idea from Count Chotek, who had suggested it in the *Ballplatz* in March while on leave from his Berlin post (Chotek to Mensdorff, letter of August 18, 1865). Chotek may have received it from Bismarck, though there is no evidence of this—The Prussian *Kultusminister* von Mühler discovered the same principle of administrative partition with combined sovereignty in the earlier history of Schleswig-Holstein (exercised jointly by the Gottorp and the royal lines), and he submitted the idea to Bismarck, suggesting a north-south partition line (memorandum in Mühler's hand, Gastein, July 31, 1865, HAA). This was a day after the expedient had been discussed by Blome and Bismarck and probably submitted to the King. Any ingenious mind could have evolved the idea independently, and doubtless many did.

¹²¹ Biegeleben pp. 293-294; Reuss to Bismarck, August 11, No. 112 (HAA), on information from Beust.

¹²² Bloomfield to Russell, August 3, No. 159 Confidential (F. O. 7 Austria 685); Werther to Bismarck, July 26, No. 239 (AGEV).

¹²³ Bloomfield to Russell, July 25, No. 136 Confidential (F. O. 7 Austria 685).

¹²⁴ Blome to Mensdorff, August 14, No. 2 (Appendix A, No. 9).

CHAPTER VIII

DIVIDING THE INDIVISIBLE DUCHIES

BLOME'S FIRST MISSION TO GASTEIN

IN the evening of July 26, Count Blome took the train for Gastein, armed with a letter of introduction from Mensdorff to Bismarck.¹ The following afternoon he reached the famous summer-resort, and was presented to the King. With formalities concluded, Blome came to grips with Austria's resourceful adversary, and for two days (July 28 and 29) the battle of arguments raged continuously. Blome proposed that Austria and Prussia should secretly confer the ducal crown upon Augustenburg.² Prussia would obtain the concessions already offered, and could negotiate for the rest with the Prince, who could be forced to get rid of his democratic advisers. When this plan met determined resistance from Bismarck, Blome brought forth the suggestion that Augustenburg should go to Berlin to apologize for himself and his followers,³ an idea of which Bismarck himself was the parent. But the premier now

¹ Werther to Bismarck, July 26, tg. No. 236 (AGEV); Mensdorff to Bismarck, letter of July 26 (draft by Biegeleben, HHS): Mensdorff asks Bismarck to present Blome to the King, and continues: "Die kais. Regierung hegt die innige Überzeugung, dass es bei beiderseitiger Mässigung, Friedensliebe, und leidenschaftsloser Auffassung nicht misslingen könne, die entstandenen Schwierigkeiten zu bewältigen, und die Bedingungen des schliesslichen Einverständnisses festzustellen. Sie wird sich glücklich schätzen, wenn Graf Blome, welcher mit ihren Intentionen vollständig betraut ist, den kön. Preussischen Hof von der gleichen Überzeugung beseelt und dem Werke der Einigung geneigt finden wird, an welches sich so hohe Interessen knüpfen."

² Autograph note of King William (to Bismarck), July 28 (HAA): "Hat Bloom bei der Idee, dass der Erbprinz im Geheimen von uns als Souverain designirt werde, zugleich als Gegenleistung, die Annahme der Februar-Forderungen *ohne* Restriction in Aussicht gestellt? Das wäre *Etwas!* Ohne dies, ist es *nichts*. W. 28/7 65."

³ Bismarck to Werther, August 2, No. 35 (G. W. V, p. 254 f.); *Origines* VI, p. 383.

disowned his child, and countered by dragging in that other *protégé*, the Grand Duke of Oldenburg, whose candidacy he was willing to discuss at once.⁴ The Austrian delegate, however, would not hear of Oldenburg, correctly estimating the proposal a mere manoeuvre to raise Austria's offers,⁵ and he clung tenaciously to the arguments developed by Biegeleben in the official notes from Vienna. At times the discussion became lively in the extreme.⁶ Bismarck blandly related all the financial and military preparations he had made.⁷ He told Blome that General Herwarth had orders to seize Prince Friedrich and imprison him in Pillau,⁸ if an agreement was not reached. He convinced the Count that he was ready for war. The session had lasted five hours without result.⁹

By July 30, the negotiations had entered a second stage. Unable to break the deadlock, the two opponents shifted their ground and began to discuss "a less war-dangerous and conflict-producing arrangement" of the temporary occupation, instead of a final solution.¹⁰ Here again an impasse might have arisen, had not one or the other, in the course of the conversations, produced a compromise plan: the withdrawal of the Austrian troops from the Prussian command, and the *geographical* separation of the Austrian from the Prussian administration.¹¹ This expedient of a temporary administrative partition was discussed on July 30 by both men.¹²

Could Count Blome really be satisfied with such a mere

⁴ *G. W. V.*, p. 254 f.

⁵ Blome to Mensdorff, August 14, No. 2 (Appendix A, No. 9).

⁶ *Origines* VII, p. 12 f.

⁷ Blome to Mensdorff, August 14, No. 2 (Appendix A, No. 9).

⁸ *Ibid.*; Jansen-Samwer p. 504.

⁹ *Origines* VII, p. 383.

¹⁰ Bismarck to Werther, August 2 (*G. W. V.*, p. 255).

¹¹ From the existing sources, it is not possible accurately to determine whether Blome or Bismarck first raised this expedient, or whether it grew step by step out of the give and take of the negotiations.

¹² This is proved beyond doubt by William's marginal on Bismarck's letter of August 1 (*Anhang* I, p. 120 f.). Yet Thimme disregards this prime source (*G. W. V.*, pp. 250, 262) as being "vague," since it contradicts his Werther documents.

stop-gap, that left the main problem still unsettled? Austria needed peace, — Franz Joseph longed to be relieved from the oppressive burden of this Schleswig-Holstein question, — the young Austrian diplomat had come to Gastein burning to “win his spurs,” to find a solution, an honorable settlement. A final appeal to the King on behalf of Augustenburg failed utterly.¹³ The thoughts that ran through Count Blome’s mind that evening may be gleaned from his later report:¹⁴

“Prussia did not take the Oldenburg candidacy very seriously, but also was not striving for annexation above everything else, holding rather to demands incompatible with a sovereign state. The King and his minister refused to commit themselves to a final solution, however innocuously it might be formulated; they insisted peremptorily upon the expulsion of the Prince of Augustenburg from Holstein and the reinstatement of the former Danish regulations concerning the press and associations,¹⁵ in a word they demanded the abolition of those conditions which stood in Prussia’s way and which for that very reason were favored by us in order to bring about an earlier end of the temporary regime. On this basis an understanding was impossible. Without the certainty of a satisfactory final solution, we could not give up the weapons we held in the *provisorium*; before we did this however Prussia would not discuss a definite settlement. . . . To sum up, . . . the present *provisorium* had become untenable, [and] a settlement according to Austria’s interests was not to be secured. The thought then came to me to propose an entirely new solution. . . . The ideal partition of the rights granted by the Vienna treaty should be transformed into a real partition, Austria receiving Holstein, Prussia Schleswig. With this I thought I had found a very happy political combination.”¹⁶

Let us pause a moment to consider this “invention” of the Austrian envoy. Did Blome really believe that he originated the idea of dividing the Duchies between the copossessors? Had he forgotten that the very phrase with which he described the new expedient, — “the ideal partition . . . should be transformed into a real partition,” — was the creation of Biegeleben,

¹³ Autograph memorandum of William, July 30 (HAA). Cf. Sybel IV, p. 123 f.

¹⁴ Appendix A, No. 9; excerpts printed by Wertheimer: *Bismarck im politischen Kampf* pp. 163-165, with confusing, and sometimes erroneous commentary.

¹⁵ These were more severe than the Austrian and Prussian laws.

¹⁶ Appendix A, No. 9.

in the Austrian note of December 21, 1864, a copy of which had reposed for months in Blome's embassy in Munich? To be sure, he did *not* know that the self-same solution had been discussed at Schönbrunn, and that in January 1865 it had been pressed upon the *Ballplatz* by Bismarck in the same striking phrase of Biegeleben's.¹⁷ But the fact that Bismarck formerly championed the idea suggests that now also he may have been the first to bring it forward.¹⁸ Undoubtedly Bismarck was skeptical that the *Hofburg* was ready yet to accept what it had often rejected before, but he may have thought best to propose it in order to be in a better position to bargain for the purely administrative division.¹⁹

The Austrian negotiator, at heart a strong believer in the Prussian alliance, saw many advantages in the complete partition, and his imagination was captivated by Bismarck's stressing the correct conservative note.²⁰ But he must have recognized, too, the difficulty of getting it accepted at home. To lessen that difficulty, Bismarck doubtless proposed that Blome should father the idea as his own,—a suggestion which would have a double appeal to the ambitious young diplomatist.²¹

¹⁷ See above, chapters iii and v, and Appendix A, No. 5.

¹⁸ Blome would hardly, in a report to the *Ballplatz*, claim authorship for an idea which he had read in a note from the *Ballplatz* unless he had forgotten the passage in the note expressing the idea. But if he had forgotten the passage and the idea, then his use of Biegeleben's striking phrase now suggests that he took it over from Bismarck (who had used it in January),—an additional indication of Bismarck's present authorship.

¹⁹ Cf. Brandenburg: *Untersuchungen* p. 436 note 2. Brandenburg's disbelief that Bismarck seriously desired the definitive partition can hardly be upheld in the light of the new documents. And why would a partial annexation at this time prevent a later total annexation of both Duchies?

²⁰ Blome's No. 2 (Appendix A, No. 9).

²¹ Cf. H. Hesselbarth: "Die Urheberchaft der Übereinkunft von Gastein," in *Historische Vierteljahrschrift* XVII, 1914, Heft 2, p. 239. Hesselbarth rightly demolishes Sybel's account, and is generally correct in analyzing the diplomatic and psychological situation between the negotiators at Gastein. But his trust in the fantastic rumors in the documents of the *Origines* (VI and VII) leads him to absurd lengths in reconstructing the detailed negotiations. His chief source, a report from Karlsruhe (*Origines* VI, p. 412 ff.), is a garbled version of Mensdorff's rambling and self-contradictory remarks to the envoy of Baden on August 5 (Edelsheim to Roggenbach, August 6, No. 139 *Vertraulich*, BGL).

But because of the smaller population of Schleswig, which would be Prussia's possession, Bismarck claimed the Duchy of Lauenburg, without compensation to Austria.²² To Blome's remark that Franz Joseph would probably turn Holstein over to the Diet to dispose of, the Prussian premier replied in all seriousness, "I advise you to keep it in your own hands."²³

The "new idea" ran into difficulties with the King, however. William had set his heart upon both Duchies, and was reluctant to give up the prospect of possessing the verdant plains of Holstein. Besides, such an arrangement would stir up a hornet's nest from the Queen, the Crown Prince and the rest of the Coburg clique.²⁴ Nevertheless, with the help of General Manteuffel, the King was finally persuaded to agree,²⁵ though to the last he doubted that his ally would accept such a defeat.²⁶

Thus the purely administrative division of the Duchies had "fallen out of the combination, and in its place had been substituted the complete partition and annexation."²⁷ There remained many details to be settled, to make the arrangement workable, and to satisfy Prussia's military and naval requirements. Blome jotted down nine points of agreement, to lay before the Kaiser.²⁸ Short of fighting, this solution offered the utmost that Austria could expect.

In their last conference, the two negotiators agreed upon strict secrecy, for Bismarck did not want any hint of the partition scheme to reach France or Italy, and Blome felt the same about Biegeleben.²⁹ Even Werther was not to be told

²² Memorandum in Blome's handwriting, undated, listing results of first mission (HHS: P. A. III. 90, *Varia*).

²³ Belcredi, *loc. cit.* p. 18.

²⁴ Cf. *Anhang I*, p. 120 f.

²⁵ Blome's No. 2 (Appendix A, No. 9).

²⁶ *Anhang I*, p. 120 f.

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ Memorandum in Blome's handwriting, undated (HHS: P. A. III. 90, *Varia*).

²⁹ Mensdorff said that Bismarck asked for secrecy (Edelsheim to Roggenbach, August 6, No. 139 *Vertraulich*, BGL). Sybel wrongly insinuates that it was Blome alone who demanded secrecy (IV, p. 125). Bismarck's anxiety is evident in his letter to William, August 1 (*Anhang I*, p. 119 f.)

anything but this.³⁰ the discussions had resulted in concord upon "a new organization of the *provisorium*."³¹ If ratified by the Emperor, the meeting of the two sovereigns would take place in Salzburg.³²

Bearing a personal message from William to Franz Joseph Count Blome departed on August 1 to lay his accord before the Emperor at Ischl.³³

MENSENDORFF SOUNDS FRANCE AND THE MITTELSTAATEN

No inkling of the progress of Blome's negotiations had reached Vienna. But Count Mensdorff could surmise that his envoy had not made much progress, for they had agreed that Blome was to send no reports unless he found Bismarck and the King more disposed to make concessions,³⁴—and no reports had been sent. The more Mensdorff and his advisors learned of Bismarck's threatening actions, the more they resented the humiliating situation into which Austria was being forced through Franz Joseph's scrupulous loyalty and his resolve not to take the slightest action which might add fuel to the Prussian flames.³⁵ If Blome failed to find a compro-

³⁰ G. W. V, p. 274.

³¹ This same phrase was used by Mensdorff and Blome in talking with Werther, and recurs in Werther's telegrams. This fact has misled Sybel (IV, p. 124 f.) and Thimme (G. W. V, p. 262) into believing that Blome brought from Gastein to Vienna the purely provisional partition. Lenz and Stern have avoided this error.

³² Bismarck to Werther, August 1, tg. No. 34 (AGEV; G. W. V, p. 251).

³³ Werther to Bismarck, August 2, tg. (AGEV). On July 30, Blome wired Mensdorff, "Ich beabsichtige Übermorgen abzureisen und Mittwoch früh in Wien einzutreffen [August 2]". Mensdorff wired back, "Bitte von Gastein nach Ischl zu gehen und dort Sr. Majestät dem Kaiser Bericht zu erstatten." (tg. July 30).

³⁴ Bloomfield to Russell, August 3, No. 159 Confidential (F. O. 7 Austria 685).

³⁵ Bloomfield found Mensdorff "seriously impressed with the gravity" of the situation. Mensdorff considered Bismarck "a wild and daring politician [who] seemed blind and deaf to all arguments except those which facilitated the accomplishment of his object in the Duchies." If any more arrests took place "the supreme command of the Austrian Brigade would be withdrawn from the Prussian General in Chief." (Similar remarks to Edelsheim on July 29; Edelsheim to Roggenbach, July 30, No. 133 *Vertraulich*, BGL.)

mise, the *Ballplatz* was convinced that even the Emperor must fight. The instructions for bringing the Duchies question to the Diet were already drafted.³⁶ Mensdorff therefore began to take stock of Austria's relations with other states, especially with France and the *Mittelstaaten*.

Since Rechberg had initiated the *rapprochement* with Napoleon in October, 1864, and Metternich had visited Compiègne in December,³⁷ Paris and Vienna had looked at each other with increasing friendliness. On the French side, this was due largely to the efforts of Drouyn de Lhuys, anxious as ever to bring about his favorite combination between Austria and France. Napoleon also desired to relieve Franz Joseph of his fears of France and Italy, so that Austria would have the courage to resist Bismarck. A conversation with Count Vitzthum von Eckstädt, whom Baron Beust had sent to Paris in January 1865 to encourage a Franco-Austrian alliance,³⁸ spurred Drouyn to a new effort in this direction. In a long talk with Metternich, he developed the theme that if Austria became involved in a war with Prussia, "you will have the secondary states on your side in the front line, and us as an eventual reserve."³⁹ However much Metternich may have desired to pursue the subject, he did not dare to do so, for he was instructed by Mensdorff to continue to assert confidence in the Prussian alliance: Austria had no idea of aggression — she was everywhere on the defensive.⁴⁰

After Austria's rejection of the Prussian February demands, Drouyn correctly guessed that the opportunity had come for a new feeler. He hinted that if Austria was prevented from speaking more firmly to Prussia by dread of an Italian attack, France might come to an understanding upon guarantees, which would give Austria a greater sense of security.⁴¹ As

³⁶ So Mensdorff told Edelsheim (*Ibid.*)

³⁷ See above, chapter v.

³⁸ Vitzthum p. 52 ff.

³⁹ Metternich to Mensdorff, January 20, 1865, No. 4D.

⁴⁰ Mensdorff to Metternich, February 5, No. 3.

⁴¹ Metternich to Mensdorff, March 10, tg. No. 18.

Mensdorff was now more inclined to let Drouyn develop the matter further,⁴² the French minister suggested a neutralization of the Adriatic, asked for Austrian counter-proposals, and gave the promise that in a war provoked by Victor Emanuel, France would observe a neutrality "severe for Italy."⁴³ Napoleon likewise renewed the assurances he had given to Metternich at Compiègne.⁴⁴

On May 10, Mensdorff summed up the attitude of the *Ballplatz* regarding a war with Italy, as follows:⁴⁵

the neutralization of the Adriatic would have as many disadvantages as advantages, hence it was not an acceptable guarantee. If Austria were successful in a campaign on land, she could endure a defeat on the sea. A more effectual aid would be Napoleon's refusal to build ships for Italy. Though an Italian attack was improbable, Mensdorff feared a Garibaldian incursion, and for such an event he asked Metternich to obtain an official declaration of French neutrality, — it was not a disadvantage to possess an *embarras de richesse* of French assurances.

In case war *did* break out, however, the Austrian minister wrote, the Monarchy would stand by the principles announced in 1861: (1) France should allow Austria complete freedom of action during the war, on condition that, (2) Austria would seek an *entente* with France upon all territorial changes in Italy after the war. Mensdorff did not anticipate that he would have to seek French aid. The main thing was for France to abstain from any military or diplomatic interference between Austria and Italy. Austria could attend to revolutionary Piedmont without difficulty.⁴⁶

The ambassador was thus instructed for emergencies.

Whether Metternich secured the desired declaration or not, Drouyn's attitude was reassuring.⁴⁷ He confided to Metternich that Bismarck was trying to ascertain what France would do in case of war,⁴⁸ and said that Prussia would not be able to get a war loan in Paris.⁴⁹ The attitude of the French press

⁴² Mensdorff to Metternich, March 16.

⁴³ Metternich to Mensdorff, letter of April 6.

⁴⁴ *Origines* VI, p. 151 f.

⁴⁵ Mensdorff to Metternich, letter of May 10.

⁴⁶ All this in Mensdorff's letter to Metternich, May 10, 1865.

⁴⁷ Mensdorff was very favorably impressed with Drouyn's solicitude in the matter of calling the Estates of the Duchies.

⁴⁸ Metternich to Mensdorff, May 7, No. 24D.

⁴⁹ Metternich to Mensdorff, June 10, No. 30A.

and public also was more friendly to Vienna than to Berlin.⁵⁰ Mensdorff was pleased that France seemed to lean toward Austria and could not refrain from thanking the *Quai d'Orsay* for its friendship.⁵¹ To prove his satisfaction in a more tangible way and keep Napoleon in good humor, Mensdorff dropped his objection to the return of North Schleswig to Denmark,⁵² a project which the French government was constantly urging upon the two German powers, and took special pains to alleviate the mistreatment of the Danish inhabitants.⁵³

As the war clouds gathered in July, Mensdorff went even farther. Bismarck had already sought to undercut Austria's influence on the Seine, by reopening commercial negotiations with Napoleon's ward, Italy, and by launching the congress idea again.⁵⁴ Metternich received instructions to parry these overtures by an offer to open the Austrian frontier between Venetia and the rest of Italy for commerce (without political recognition),⁵⁵ and by the suggestion that France call a restricted conference to settle the Duchies question alone.⁵⁶ France however desired neither the congress nor the conference, but cast a grateful eye upon the overtures to Italy. Met-

⁵⁰ In a much-noticed speech, Thiers warned against the danger of an enlarged Prussia, and advocated a Franco-Austrian alliance to hold Prussia in check (Oncken: *Rheinpolitik* I, p. 42 f.). Goltz considered the majority of the French chamber to be ultramontane, and thought that Napoleon might be forced by public opinion to oppose Prussia (to Bismarck, April 18: Oncken I, p. 44 f.). These reports alarmed King William (*G. W. V.*, p. 168 f.), and caused Bismarck to attempt to secure a reassuring statement from Benedetti (*Origines* VI, p. 182 ff.)

⁵¹ Mensdorff to Metternich, May 10, No. 5.

⁵² *Origines* VI, p. 254.

⁵³ *Ibid.*; Mensdorff to Metternich, May 23. Mensdorff also promised that the negotiations for an Austro-French commercial treaty would be resumed with the determination to come to a prompt agreement (*Origines* VI, p. 323).

⁵⁴ Metternich surmised that Bismarck intended to play this congress-card in his interviews in the autumn with Napoleon at Biarritz (Metternich to Mensdorff, July 19, No. 34B *Réserve*).

⁵⁵ The *Ballplatz* ordered the prefect of finances in Venice to talk directly with the Italian finance minister to propose that the stipulations of the old treaty of commerce with Sardinia be applied reciprocally all along the frontiers. This offer was rebuffed in September.

⁵⁶ *Origines* VI, pp. 366 f., 388.

ternich again could reassure his foreign office that Napoleon would remain quiet until the German powers were at war, and that later he would engage on the side that offered him *real* advantages. In any case, he would give Austria sufficient warning before such an event.⁵⁷

This was the situation when Blome left for Gastein, and Mensdorff could congratulate himself upon it. But in view of Bismarck's attempts to seduce Italy, it was advisable not to let the situation change for the worse. Mensdorff therefore wired Metternich to watch Goltz and Nigra, and keep the French Government in good humor.

"Try to secure a warning to the Florentine cabinet not to encourage Bismarck's war fancies. . . . Postpone your vacation and await the result of Blome's mission. In case it fails we might have important overtures to address to the French government"⁵⁸

Metternich's reply was even more encouraging:

" I consider any attempt of Prussia to secure a French alliance as harmless. . . . Meanwhile I think the Emperor will counsel prudence to Italy. Our Emperor should not let the King depart without making a last personal effort for friendship. Bismarck wants war, but fools himself about the political constellation."⁵⁹

Simultaneously, Mensdorff sounded Lord Bloomfield on England's attitude in the event of an Austro-Prussian war. "Suppose the Rhine or Belgium were threatened, England must move?" he asked. Somewhat taken aback, the ambassador replied that England, he supposed, would act according to her international engagements and her interests; but he did not think things would come to such a pass. Mensdorff agreed that Prussia would probably not care to take the field, "but

⁵⁷ Metternich to Mensdorff, July 19, No. 34B *Réservee*. When the ambassador bade farewell to Napoleon and Eugénie, who left Paris for the summer, politics were hardly touched. Metternich was confident that Austria had nothing to fear from Napoleon's scheduled meetings with the Italians at Plombières, and in October with Bismarck at Biarritz.

⁵⁸ Mensdorff to Metternich, July 29, tg. (Oncken I, p. 48 note 1).

⁵⁹ Metternich to Mensdorff, July 31, tg. (Oncken I, p. 48 note 1).

M. de Bismarck was a wild and daring politician; he seemed blind and deaf to all arguments. . . ." ⁶⁰

* * * * *

From the *Mittelstaaten*, the *Ballplatz* wanted more than a sympathetic neutrality. It hoped for the active military support of the majority of them. To be sure, Mensdorff had no illusions about the quality or the quantity of their "armies." ⁶¹ But an open partisanship for Austria would be of considerable moral value. What were the prospects?

As we know, the relations between Austria and these would-be powers had greatly improved since the summer of 1864. In spite of his reserve toward them, Mensdorff had won back much of the confidence that Rechberg had lost, notably in Hesse-Darmstadt and Saxony, and Austria's support of the Bavarian resolution had shown that the *Hofburg* might still be reckoned as a bulwark against Prussian encroachments upon their sovereignty. During the winter and spring Baden had spontaneously sought to let bygones be bygones, and had become a few shades less black in the eyes of Vienna. ⁶² But the genuineness of this favorable disposition remained to be tested. Baden's larger neighbor, Würtemberg, too, had moved toward Austria. At first inclined sympathetically toward Prussia, prime minister Varnbüler now wished to eradicate such an impression. ⁶³ Mensdorff's acceptance of his mediation had flattered him immensely, ⁶⁴ and Prussia's sabre-rattling alienated the court of Stuttgart no less than that of Hanover.

⁶⁰ Bloomfield to Russell, August 3, No. 157 Confidential (F. O. 7 Austria 685).

⁶¹ *Ibid.*; Werther to Bismarck, letter of August 8 (HAA); Vogt p 78; Ebeling: *Friedrich Ferdinand Graf von Beust* II, p. 299.

⁶² On November 1, 1864, Roggenbach suggested to the Grand Duke a *rapprochement* with Austria (Oncken: *Grossherzog Friedrich I. von Baden* I, p. 472 ff.). Friedrich wrote a conciliatory letter to Franz Joseph in February 1865 and received a friendly reply (*Ibid.* I, p. 480 ff.). The Grand Duke's brother thereupon reentered the Austrian army (*Origines* VI, p. 39). Austria contributed to better relations by recalling the very unpopular chargé, von Pilat.

⁶³ Wolkenstein to Mensdorff, letter of August 8, 1865.

⁶⁴ Cf. his delight at knowing more about the inner thoughts of the *Ballplatz* than did Pfordten or Roggenbach (*Origines* VI, p. 404).

We have already seen how, in April, the blind king George of Hanover took fright, and opened conversations with Vienna for a naval convention.⁶⁵ His kingdom was the only northern state of sufficient size to interest the *Ballplatz*. In war, it might serve to detain a considerable force of Prussian troops. Stout defender of the Oldenburg candidacy, the King could only be won by playing upon his fear of Prussia. On July 6, Mensdorff sent to Count Ingelheim, the Austrian envoy, a message to be read to the King alone.⁶⁶ In it Franz Joseph expressed his firm determination to preserve the sovereignty of the German states, specifically the North-German states, against Prussia, and closed with his assurance of special friendship for Hanover.⁶⁷ But before it could be executed, this *démarche* was foiled by the vigilance of Count Platen,⁶⁸ to whom Ingelheim later presented a less potent communication for the King.⁶⁹ Platen again brought up his plan for a naval convention, with compensations for Austria and Hanover, but made not the slightest offer of support for Austria in the present crisis,—only courteous phrases about the kindred feeling of the two monarchs.⁷⁰ Yet the *Ballplatz* could rest assured that Hanover would not take the side of the enemy of the Diet.⁷¹

In one respect, Hanover pleased the Vienna statesmen mightily, — King George resisted, more stoutly than any other sovereign, Bismarck's efforts toward a new commercial treaty by which the *Zollverein* states would officially recognize the new Italy. Mensdorff did all that he could to undermine this diplomatic offensive of the Prussian premier. He applauded

⁶⁵ See above, chapter vi.

⁶⁶ Another long communication was to be read to Count Platen (Mensdorff to Ingelheim, July 6 *Reservirt*. Partially printed in Hassell: *Geschichte des Königreichs Hannover* II-2, p. 258 f.).

⁶⁷ Mensdorff to Ingelheim, July 6 *Geheim*.

⁶⁸ And the intriguing Meding (Hassell II-2, p. 262 f.).

⁶⁹ Ingelheim to Mensdorff, July 28, No. 35.

⁷⁰ *Ibid*. The King drafted a reply to the Austrian note, arguing still in favor of Oldenburg.

⁷¹ A little later Bismarck soured Hanover and was told that he could expect no aid at all (*G. W. V.*, p. 138 note 1).

Platen, Beust, and Pfordten for their resistance,⁷² and disapproved Bismarck's charge that Austria enjoyed the most-favored-nation status herself with Sardinia.⁷³ When the manufacturers put such pressure on their governments that Pfordten and Beust began to waver,⁷⁴ Mensdorff advised them to enter commercial relations *without* political recognition.⁷⁵ The Bavarian minister did not make himself any more popular in Vienna by concerting with Baron Beust upon another resolution concerning Schleswig and Holstein and bringing it before the Diet just at this time.⁷⁶ But it gave Franz Joseph one more opportunity to prove his loyalty to the alliance by joining Bismarck in voting to bury the resolution in committee.⁷⁷

In spite of these differences, Mensdorff took increasing pains to keep the *Mittelstaaten* behind him in his efforts on behalf of Augustenburg.⁷⁸ He revealed to the ministers of the principal

⁷² Mensdorff to the Austrian envoys in Munich, Dresden, and Hanover, June 6. He urged these courts to persevere in their "zuwartende Haltung" toward Italy, and expressed his pleasure at their partially negative replies to the Prussian proposals.

⁷³ Bismarck's charge, in *G. W. V.*, p. 212. Mensdorff claimed that the Austrian commercial treaty of 1851 with Sardinia was inoperative, because relations were unsettled (circular to the principal German courts, except Baden, July 22).

⁷⁴ Pfordten confided to Blome, that after the settlement (!) of the Duchies question, he intended to reconsider the Italian question, and he urged Austria to take the lead in liberalising relations with Italy (Blome to Mensdorff, June 14, No. 37C. Cf. *Origines* VI, pp. 304, 410; Werner to Mensdorff, July 15, No. 66).

⁷⁵ Mensdorff to Werner, July 23 *Vertraulich*, and circular to the principal German courts except Baden, July 23 *Vertraulich*. Mensdorff gives credit to Beust for this idea, and states that Austria is at present attempting to secure a "more normal condition of commercial relations on our Italian borders" without touching the political question at all.

⁷⁶ Pfordten had earlier asked Mensdorff (and Bismarck) to communicate to the Diet their decision as to the Estates of the Duchies (Pfordten to Bray, June 25. Copy in HHS). Mensdorff favored the request (Mensdorff to Werther, June 27), and so did Bismarck (*G. W. V.*, p. 218). But Beust talked Pfordten over to his own plan of a strong three-fold resolution (*Origines* VI, pp. 333, 340, 356).

⁷⁷ Mensdorff to Kübeck, July 25, tg.; *Origines* VI, p. 358 f.

⁷⁸ Bloomfield to Russell, July 29, No. 133 Confidential (F. O. 7 Austria 685).

states his correspondence with Prussia regarding Schleswig-Holstein,⁷⁹ and on July 29 took particular pleasure in sending them a full account of Prussia's arbitrary arrests of Frese and May.⁸⁰ As the tension increased, he spoke more firmly to the German envoys, and tried to prepare them for a rupture. If Bismarck's answer to Blome's proposals was unsatisfactory, he told Baron Edelsheim, Austria would bring the whole question before the Diet. "We hope that the secondary states will then realize how costly every minute is, and will not lose the most precious moments by superfluous formalities."⁸¹ The envoy of Baden, evidently on his own authority, declared that his sovereign would take Austria's part in spite of his relationship to King William.⁸² Already Saxony and Hesse-Darmstadt, guided by Bismarck's most inveterate opponents, Beust and Dalwigk, and placed at the mercy of Prussia in war, had offered their armies to Austria.⁸³ Hanover was friendly but neutral,

⁷⁹ Circulars of July 15 and 22. The documents were to be shown to the foreign ministers, except in Darmstadt (?) and Cassel. These overtures were important, for they showed clearly, (I) that Austria was willing to go to the limit in naval concessions to Prussia in return for Prussia's concession on the military convention, and (II) that Austria was still stoutly defending Augustenburg against Oldenburg. It was doubly desirable that *Baron Pfordten* should know the true situation, half of which Bismarck had concealed from him (see below). Yet by some inexplicable mistake, these documents do not seem to have been shown to him, and he was ignorant of the noteworthy Austrian concessions until about July 30. (They appeared in the *Kölnische Zeitung* about July 29: *Origines* VI, p. 360). That Bismarck had left Pfordten in half ignorance, is shown by the fact that the Baron advised Austria to make *maritime* concessions, a thing that she had already done (Loftus to Russell, Munich, August 1, No. 51 Confidential. F. O. 9 Bavaria 169).

⁸⁰ Circular of July 29 to the principal German courts.

⁸¹ Edelsheim to Roggenbach, July 30, No. 133 *Vertraulich* (BGL). The *Bailplatz* intended to avoid a *formal* breach of the treaty with Prussia, by simply ceding to the Confederation the Austrian rights to *one-half* the Duchies (Edelsheim to Roggenbach, August 3, No. 136, BGL).

⁸² Vogt p. 71. In this initiative, Baron Edelsheim went beyond the intentions of his own minister, Roggenbach, who was planning the armed neutrality of the secondary states (Oncken: *Grossherzog Friedrich I. von Baden* I, pp. 485, 488).

⁸³ Saxony, first (Vogt p. 78), date uncertain. Dalwigk's offer on July 26 (Vogt p. 71), both of men and money (Brenner to Mensdorff, Darmstadt, August 5, No. 1).

Württemberg did not commit herself as yet.⁸⁴ The pivotal state was Bavaria. As Bavaria decided, so would her two South German neighbors.

It was singularly unfortunate for Austria, that the largest German secondary state was ruled by an inexperienced monarch and a wavering minister. As we have seen, Pfordten's ambitions for Bavaria clashed with his federal obligations.⁸⁵ Bismarck skillfully accentuated this conflict, and paralysed any positive action by Pfordten on behalf of Austria. Two things predisposed the Baron toward Bismarck in the present situation: the intuition, rare at that time, that the Prussian army was superior to the Austrian; and what seemed to be a handsome concession on the February demands, viz., Prussia's readiness to discuss with the Diet the future military arrangements of the Duchies. (Bismarck had concealed from Pfordten the fact that he had made this concession contingent upon Oldenburg's installation).⁸⁶ When, in addition, the Prussian premier granted him a long interview at Salzburg,⁸⁷ where he impressed the Baron with his iron firmness and his preparations for war, and in return for Bavaria's neutrality probably offered Pfordten the hegemony of South Germany,⁸⁸ with a hint that Bavaria might annex the Inn-Viertel of Austria,⁸⁹ the spell was complete. The impressionable statesman was enchanted, "exalted."⁹⁰ He readily allowed himself to be used as a means of pressure upon Vienna, as we have seen, and thus proved as usual a disappointment to the *Ballplatz*. The Aus-

⁸⁴ But Varnbüler was openly opposing Bismarck on the Italian treaty (Wolkenstein to Mensdorff, Stuttgart, August 3, No. 38).

⁸⁵ See above, chapter v, and K. A. von Müller: *Bayern im Jahre 1866*, pp. 20-27.

⁸⁶ Bismarck to Reuss, July 5 (G. W. V, p. 222 f.).

⁸⁷ See above, chapter vii.

⁸⁸ So Lord Bloomfield learned "aus ganz zuverlässiger Quelle" (Edelsheim to Roggenbach, August 5, No. 138, BGL). Cf. K. A. von Müller p. 14; Beust: *Aus Drei Vierteljahrhunderten* I, p. 431 f.; *Allgemeine Zeitung*, No. 228, Vienna, August 14, 1865.

⁸⁹ Przibram: *Erinnerungen eines alten Oesterreichers* p. 141. Cf. Fröbel II, p. 415.

⁹⁰ Reuss to Bismarck, letter of July 27, 1865 (HAA).

trian press was consequently encouraged to castigate him (with more truth than tactfulness) as Prussia's tool.⁹¹

There could be little doubt in Vienna however, that if it came to war, Bavaria must fight on the side of the *Bund*, Augustenburg, and Austria.⁹² But the problem was to get Pfordten started in time to act as a spur to other laggards, and to be of material help in the beginning of the campaign. While Blome was still in Gastein, therefore, Mensdorff thought best to begin work upon Bavaria. Pfordten was not asked to give a formal promise of support,⁹³ but Mensdorff trusted that, if the present *pourparlers* failed, the Bavarian minister would at once leave no doubt of his decision.⁹⁴ At the same time, Mensdorff communicated the Emperor's desire to meet Pfordten at Salzburg, in case the imperial trip to Gastein materialized.⁹⁵ The *Ballplatz* counted also on King Johann of Saxony, who was staying near Munich,⁹⁶ to exert the strongest pressure upon Ludwig II and his ministers.

On the whole, then, despite Pfordten's uncertainty, the foreign constellation appeared not unfavorable to Austria. Best of all, Italy seemed reluctant to join Bismarck.⁹⁷ Such was

⁹¹ Probably inspired in this by the *Ballplatz*. Pfordten resented these slurs bitterly (Zwierzina to Mensdorff, Munich, August 13, No. 50), and finally hit back in his *Bayerische Zeitung*.

⁹² Mensdorff told Edelsheim: "Er zweifle nicht, dass wenn es 'zum Schlagen' kommen sollte, Baiern Oesterreich zur Seite stehen und es mit seiner vollen Kraft unterstützen werde. . . ." (Edelsheim to Roggenbach, August 6, No. 139, BGL). Mensdorff held the same language to others, after the crisis was past (Edelsheim to Roggenbach, August 28, No. 146, BGL). Somewhat contrary and more disillusioned remarks of the minister (cf Vogt p. 78) may be considered simply undiplomatic attempts to justify Austria's Gastein compromise at Pfordten's expense.

⁹³ Cf. *Origines* VI, p. 430.

⁹⁴ Mensdorff to Zwierzina, July 29: Mensdorff stated that Bismarck would think twice before provoking a war if he knew that Bavaria would mobilize as soon as he mobilized.

⁹⁵ Mensdorff to Zwierzina, letter of July 29. Cf. Friesen II, p. 124.

⁹⁶ Hassel: *Aus dem Leben des Königs Albert von Sachsen* II, p. 210.

⁹⁷ Friesen II, p. 124. The *Ballplatz* had intercepted the following Prussian telegrams: Usedom to Bismarck, July 27, 29, 30; Bismarck to Usedom, July 31, No. 19 (See *G. W. V.*, p. 249).

the situation as Blome was about to leave Gastein. Immediately Mensdorff wired Franz Joseph for permission to join him in Ischl,⁹⁸ and prepared to set out when the Emperor replied, "Come."⁹⁹

THE DECISIVE COUNCIL IN VIENNA

Count Mensdorff had arrived at an important decision during the anxious days while Blome was at Gastein. Long weary of his uncongenial position,¹⁰⁰ he felt humiliated when the Emperor transferred to Count Belcredi the presidency of the minister council, which Mensdorff had held during the cabinet crisis.¹⁰¹ Incensed at the way Bismarck was making capital out of Austria's distress, and loath to yield too readily the favorable position he had won in the Duchies and in Germany, Mensdorff feared that Blome had failed in his mission and that he might persuade the Emperor to accept a diplomatic defeat in the interest of peace.¹⁰² "The by no means unfavorable foreign constellation" led him to believe "that the attempt to meet Prussian pretensions by a more determined stand . . . might offer some chance of success."¹⁰³ He hastened to Ischl, heard with dismay Blome's compromise, argued for firmness

⁹⁸ Mensdorff to Franz Joseph, August 1, tg. 10.50 a. m.: "Nach interceptirten Depeschen scheint Graf Blome nichts erreicht zu haben. Die Intrigue mit Italien dauert fort. Preussen und Italien scheinen über Frankreichs Haltung noch im Unklaren. Befehlen Euer Majestät, dass ich mich nach Ischl begeben, wo ich morgen Vormittag eintreffen könnte?"

⁹⁹ Franz Joseph to Mensdorff, August 1, tg. received 3.43 p. m.

¹⁰⁰ Cf. his words to Bloomfield: "The Emperor knew full well how anxious he was to retire from office, and that a day did not pass without his desiring to place his resignation at the Emperor's feet." (Bloomfield to Russell, letter of June 29. F. O. 356 Bloomfield Papers 39).

¹⁰¹ Mensdorff to Franz Joseph, October 26, 1866 (Wertheimer: "Zwei ungedruckte Denkschriften des oesterreichischen Ministers Graf Mensdorff über das Jahr 1866," in *Preussische Jahrbücher* CLXXX, 1920, Heft 3, p. 338).

¹⁰² Bloomfield reported that "the Emperor is much more inclined to make concessions to Prussia than are his government and this may account for Count Mensdorff's sudden and unexpected journey to Ischl." (Bloomfield to Russell, August 3, No. 159 Confidential. F. O. 7 Austria 685).

¹⁰³ Wertheimer, *loc. cit.*, pp. 338-339; also p. 336.

upon Austria's own diplomatic ground,¹⁰⁴ and offered to resign his position if such a policy failed.¹⁰⁵

Blome had previously explained his plan to the Emperor with messianic enthusiasm, and had persuaded the monarch to take the total-partition scheme under consideration.¹⁰⁶ Mensdorff's unexpected intransigence threw the Emperor into confusion.¹⁰⁷ In the face of these two alternatives, acceptance or rejection, Franz Joseph decided to return to Vienna and lay the question before the other ministers in the hope of finding some half-and-half middle course, as usual.¹⁰⁸ Blome, much disappointed, returned with Mensdorff to the capital.

The Emperor reached Vienna on Saturday morning, August 5, and went at once to preside at a conference called for 10 o'clock.¹⁰⁹ The news that the monarch had broken his vacation produced a panic on the stock exchange,¹¹⁰ and the public was roused to fury against Bismarck who was taking such

¹⁰⁴ Mensdorff had given orders to Biegeleben to hold himself in readiness to come to Ischl if called (Edelsheim to Roggenbach, August 3, No. 136, BGL), in order to draw up a strong note for Blome to take back to Gastein. Mensdorff probably reasoned that, either Bismarck would back down if confronted with determination, or if he preferred a rupture, all Europe would consider Prussia the aggressor (cf. Blome's No. 2, Appendix A, No. 9).

¹⁰⁵ Wertheimer, *loc. cit.*, p. 339.

¹⁰⁶ Blome's No. 2 (Appendix A, No. 9). Taken literally, this passage in Blome's account seems to indicate that Franz Joseph accepted Blome's plan outright, and had given him orders to conclude an agreement on that basis, before Mensdorff arrived. That Franz Joseph personally was not averse to complete partition seems apparent from the protocol of the council of April 25, 1866 (Redlich: *Das österreichische Staats- und Reichsproblem* II, p. 802).

¹⁰⁷ A letter from Metternich came to Mensdorff's support. Meysenbug wired to Ischl: "Privatbrief des Fürsten Metternich vom 31. Juli bestätigt die früheren Andeutungen wegen der mutmasslichen neutralen Haltung Frankreichs, empfiehlt übrigens directe Einwirkung des Kaisers auf den König wegen Entlassung Bismarcks, da letzterer persönlich zum Kriege entschlossen sei. . ." (tg. August 2).

¹⁰⁸ So far as I can determine, Sybel and Stern have no documentary basis for asserting that *Mensdorff* suggested the council.

¹⁰⁹ *Neue Freie Presse*, No. 335 (Evening edition), August 5; Werther to Bismarck, August 4, tg. No. 241 (HAA).

¹¹⁰ *The Times* (London), No. 25,255; Vienna tg. August 4, noon.

Machiavellian advantage of Austria's distress. There was no doubt that the army and the people would support strong measures to take the conceit out of Prussia.¹¹¹

The cabinet which met to decide the fate of the Blome-Bismarck compromise, and with it the question of peace or war, was little more than a rump. Only half a dozen ministers attended, and of these, only two had been in office more than a fortnight.¹¹² In order to insure the greatest secrecy, not even the usual secretary was admitted to take the minutes, but the ministers alternated at the job.¹¹³ As no copies were retained in the archives, we know very little about the actual discussions.¹¹⁴ But from fragmentary revelations by three of the participants, it is possible to reconstruct the main lines of those decisive discussions.¹¹⁵

* * * * *

What was the situation that faced the council?

¹¹¹ Sybel IV, p. 126.

¹¹² Count Mensdorff told Baron Edelsheim that, in addition to himself and the Emperor, who presided, there were present Count Belcredi, Count Larisch (finances), von Majlath (Hungarian affairs), and Count Haller (temporary chancellor for Transylvania) (Edelsheim to Roggenbach, August 6, No. 139 *Vertraulich*, BGL). A similar list was given in the *Allgemeine Zeitung*, No. 228, August 13; and the *Neue Freie Presse*, No. 335, August 5. Probably Count Esterhazy also attended (cf. Sybel IV, p. 127; Belcredi, *loc. cit.* p. 8), but did not wish the fact to be published. The minister of war, Ritter von Franck, who had been retained from the Schmerling ministry, was absent on sick-leave.

¹¹³ *Allgemeine Zeitung*, No. 224, Vienna, August 10.

¹¹⁴ Sybel's account, if somewhat too literal, fairly well sums up the arguments for and against a compromise (IV, p. 126 f.). He relied almost entirely on the reports of Baron Werther and Count Groeben, neither of whom had "inside information" on the council meetings.

¹¹⁵ The three chief sources are Belcredi, Blome, and Mensdorff. Belcredi gives the arguments or the attitudes of Blome, Mensdorff, Esterhazy, and himself ("Fragmente aus dem Nachlasse," in *Die Kultur* 1906, pp. 18-20); Blome reproduces the arguments for and against the definitive partition (Blome to Mensdorff, August 14, No. 2: Appendix A, No. 9); Mensdorff let out several secrets to the envoy of Baden (Edelsheim to Roggenbach, August 6, No. 139 *Vertraulich*, BGL), from whom, directly or indirectly, the news reached the *Allgemeine Zeitung* (August 15, No. 227, Vienna correspondence, August 13). The minor sources for the council are too numerous to list here.

The March policy had done only half its work: it had successfully suffocated the annexation propaganda in the Duchies and saved them for Augustenburg. But it had not brought Bismarck to his knees. Austria had made two mistakes: she had thought that Bismarck would "capitulate before blank cartridges"; and in the flush of victory in the Duchies, Halbhüser and the Augustenburgers had gone too far, and laid themselves open to the charge of law-breaking. Bismarck had called Austria's bluff, and made out a plausible case against Halbhüser. Was Bismarck bluffing in return?

We know now, since the war of 1866, that Bismarck was in earnest, that he would actually provoke a conflict if his demands were not satisfied. He saw that Prussia's position was intrinsically sounder than Austria's. He appreciated that the efficiency of the Prussian military machine would offset the creaking inefficiency of the larger Austrian army. Knowing that Prussian hegemony would come more quickly by war than by peace, he was not sorry to face a war,¹¹⁶ whereas Franz Joseph had little to gain and much to lose by war. The gain, thought the Emperor, would accrue largely to the "Revolution." Confident of the international constellation, Bismarck had provoked the crisis at the most inconvenient time for his ally. He could capitalize the situation to improve Prussia's position and, even without a war, wring a considerable diplomatic victory out of Austria.¹¹⁷ The present crisis might then serve as a dress rehearsal for the real war,—it would oil the

¹¹⁶ He told Goltz at Regensburg "that the war with Austria was simply a question of time and he considered the present moment most favorable. Austria [continued Goltz] was to be put in such a position that she would have to accept a deep humiliation or pick up the gauntlet." (Oncken: *Rhein-politik* I, p. 60). "A war is easier to bring about now, than under the 'bourgeois banker-regime' that the Crown Prince would head" (Goltz to Bernstorff, letter of October 22, 1865; Dorn: *Robert Heinrich Graf von der Goltz*, p. 199, note 218).

¹¹⁷ "We are not for war at all costs, but must be ready for it according to circumstances," Bismarck wired to Usedom (Gastein, August 5, tg. No. 12, PGS). He had not gained the King for annexation at all costs, and the King's military advisors and many of the conservatives were cool toward a war.

diplomatic machinery and show what adjustments were necessary for the performance itself.¹¹⁸ He therefore left several loopholes through which Austria might now escape war. She might accept the May plan,¹¹⁹ or the July plan,¹²⁰ or the February demands, or a humiliating alteration of the provisional regime.¹²¹

Unaware of this reasoning, Blome convinced the ministers in council, except Mensdorff,¹²² that Bismarck was really in earnest, and that there was no alternative now but partition or war. Could Austria wage a successful war?

The military situation was not the most depressing factor in the minds of these men. The army was in good shape,¹²³ it had fought better than the Prussians in the Danish war,¹²⁴ and everyone seemed to think that Austria could win against Prussia in the field.¹²⁵ But the army was everywhere being reduced to the peace footing or below, to save money.¹²⁶ It would have to stand six weeks on the defensive before it could

¹¹⁸ For instance, Bismarck discovered that, in order to allay Italy's suspicions, he must negotiate a binding treaty: at the next crisis, be prepared at the beginning for such a treaty. Bismarck also determined the next time to raise the German question itself as a more effective battle cry to spur the King to action, to convince Italy of his seriousness, and to act as a counterpoise against a possible French aggression.

¹¹⁹ A large money payment for Austria's share, Prussia to indemnify the claimants. This was the program for Manteuffel's abortive mission.

¹²⁰ Oldenburg, with minor concessions

¹²¹ Whether Bismarck had the administrative partition in mind at this time is not known. He told Napier that he had not expected a partition to be accepted by Austria (Napier to Russell, Gastein, August 17, No. 225 Most Confidential. F. O. 64 Prussia 576). Possibly he thought that Austria might agree to a repression of the Augustenburg movement, with the recall of Halbhüser, and the promise to treat the Prince as a mere private citizen. (For specific demands of Bismarck for the improvement of conditions in the Duchies, see *G. W. V.*, p. 203)

¹²² Cf. *Origines* VII, p. 141; Edelsheim to Roggenbach, August 6, No. 139 *Vertraulich* (BGL).

¹²³ Mensdorff (Bloomfield to Russell, August 9, No. 163 Confidential. F. O. 7 Austria 685).

¹²⁴ So all Austrians were convinced.

¹²⁵ Blome's No. 2 (Appendix A, No. 9).

¹²⁶ Werther to Bismarck, August 5, tg. No. 257 (HAA).

strike.¹²⁷ Where would the money come from to wage a war? Here was the heart of the matter. The new cabinet faced a deficit of 80 millions, and the sources of revenue had largely been tapped.¹²⁸ A foreign loan was essential to avert bankruptcy, but could be procured only at exorbitant rates. The financiers of Vienna and abroad were not on the side of the "ministry of the Counts."¹²⁹ Belcredi insisted on strict economy in every department, including army and navy,¹³⁰ and was about to entrust the pruning of the budget to a control commission.¹³¹ Mobilization would play havoc with these excellent resolutions. Yet Mensdorff argued that the imperial domains could be pawned,¹³² and the people would make great sacrifices for a war.¹³³ Was it worth the price?

War moreover would break dangerously into negotiations with Hungary, and might even bring a revolution beyond the Leitha.¹³⁴ In addition, certain most urgent reforms in administration and several projected commercial treaties would be indefinitely postponed should it come to hostilities.¹³⁵ Possibly also the new ministers disliked to undertake the burdens of a war while they still felt themselves new in their ministries. Mensdorff, on the contrary, saw in the partition proposal merely a ruse of Bismarck's to gain time until William left Austrian

¹²⁷ Declaration of war minister Franck (Stern IX, p. 418); Mensdorff to Gagern (Vogt p. 78).

¹²⁸ Beer: *Die Finanzen Oesterreichs im Neunzehnten Jahrhundert*, p. 332.

¹²⁹ Beer p. 334.

¹³⁰ Memorandum for Franz Joseph, June 1, 1865 (*Kabinettsarchiv*, HHS).

¹³¹ It was set up on August 10 (Beer p. 334).

¹³² Werther to Bismarck, letter of August 8 (AGEV).

¹³³ *Ibid.* Bloomfield wrote, "There is a strong feeling with the Publick that Austria . . . must take up the cudgels rather than be trampled on by Prussia." (Letter to Russell, August 10. F. O. 356 Bloomfield Papers 39)

¹³⁴ On this point, sources differ. Probably Belcredi exaggerated Majlath's assertion (Belcredi, *loc. cit.*, p. 5). Groeben, Prussian attaché, considered Hungary loyal to Austria (Sybel IV, p. 126 f.). The consensus of Austrian political opinion had long held a major war to be unsafe until Hungary had been appeased. (See above, chapter i, and Hassel: *Aus dem Leben des Königs Albert von Sachsen II*, p. 214).

¹³⁵ Wertheimer, *loc. cit.* p. 339.

soil.¹³⁶ But the Count said little in defense of his stand.¹³⁷ When the vote was called for, only he and one other favored resistance, if necessary, by war.¹³⁸

Having decided to compromise, the council turned to the form for such a retreat. Should they accept the complete partition and annexation project of Blome-Bismarck? Or could they patch up the *provisorium* in a way to prevent the constant friction between the *Commissars*? During the discussion someone, probably Esterhazy, brought up the purely administrative division plan and placed it on the table beside Blome's complete partition. Theoretically, Blome's solution was an excellent one, and he had a host of arguments on his fingertips. He reasoned as follows:¹³⁹ because of its exposed position, its Danish majority, and its inferiority to Holstein, the Duchy of Schleswig would become for Prussia "a second Venetia."¹⁴⁰ With Holstein, Austria would redeem her pledge to Augustenburg and the Diet, withdraw honorably from a complicated situation, and remain at peace with both sides, to either of which she could throw her influence at will. Uncomfortable in Schleswig, Prussia would cling to Austria for moral support, whereas under the provisional regime Austria was tied to Prussia's skirts. By the complete partition Austria's two policies, the Augustenburg settlement and peace with Prussia, would be reasonably satisfied.

Against these arguments, Belcredi was prepared to raise a battery of practical considerations.¹⁴¹ How could the Diet, after all its resolutions and activities on behalf of Friedrich

¹³⁶ Edelsheim to Roggenbach, August 6, No. 139 *Vertraulich* (BGL).

¹³⁷ Belcredi, *loc. cit.*, p. 4; Wertheimer, *loc. cit.*, p. 339; Edelsheim to Roggenbach, August 6, No. 139 *Vertraulich* (BGL).

¹³⁸ Majlath stood by Mensdorff. Opposed to war were Belcredi, Larisch, and Haller (Edelsheim to Roggenbach, August 6, No. 139 *Vertraulich*, BGL; *Allgemeine Zeitung*, No. 227, Vienna, August 13; No. 228, Vienna, August 13).

¹³⁹ Blome's No. 2 (Appendix A, No. 9).

¹⁴⁰ Blome's phrase, quoted by Belcredi, *loc. cit.* p. 18.

¹⁴¹ Belcredi, *loc. cit.* pp. 18-20. Cf. Belcredi's words to Schulte in July (Schulte: *Lebenserinnerungen* I, p. 112).

VIII, "the rightful sovereign of the undivided Duchies," back down now without entirely abdicating its position? But even if the Diet did accept the humiliating gift from Austria, it could not refrain from some sort of declaration reserving the rights of the Duchies to a later political union. This would give the signal for a long and swiftly developing series of clashes with Prussia, clashes from which Bismarck would derive valuable aid for his master plan of challenging Austrian hegemony in Germany. In fact, Belcredi strongly suspected that the whole project was only a Bismarckian trap for Austria.¹⁴² By accepting it, Austria would not only become completely isolated in Germany, but would not even gain the peace which she so badly needed to complete her internal consolidation.

Blome could not let this challenge pass, and launched into a warm defense of Bismarck, who he claimed sincerely desired a good understanding with Austria, so long as his conservative internal policy was not hindered thereby.¹⁴³ Yet Blome was forced to admit that Bismarck's internal difficulties would eventually lead him to seek victories abroad.¹⁴⁴ In this, he and Belcredi were agreed. But before that eventuality, Blome foresaw a considerable period of peace through the definitive partition, while Belcredi saw early complications. Blome saw in the continuation of the *provisorium* merely a prolonging of agony and uncertainty. Belcredi and Esterhazy looked upon it as the only means of securing a few months' peace with honor. Blome considered his own scheme a near-defeat for Prussia; the others pronounced it a retreat for Austria.

Franz Joseph finally adopted the view of the majority. It would have required courage for him to accept a solution which most Germans held to be a breach of faith toward the Duchies

¹⁴² Mensdorff also considered it a Bismarckian idea (Edelsheim to Roggenbach, August 6, No. 139 *Vertraulich*, BGL).

¹⁴³ Werther to Bismarck, letter of August 8 (HAA); Blome's No. 2 (Appendix A, No. 9).

¹⁴⁴ Cf. Bismarck's words to Rechberg at Schönbrunn (see above, chapter iii).

and the Diet.¹⁴⁵ Doubtless the Emperor also hoped for some *déus ex machina* during the next few months to bring Prussia to offer a guarantee of Venetia.¹⁴⁶ He was glad to preserve the peace, and to be saved from the awful dilemma of choosing between Prussia and the Confederation. And so he cast his decision for the temporary palliative.

Mensdorff's choice between the temporary and the complete partition is nowhere recorded. Probably he was content to let the others assume responsibility, since his policy of firmness had been overthrown. With due credit to the foreign minister for his independence of judgment and dispassionate calculation of the factors in the situation, we now know that Austria could not have won the war in 1865.¹⁴⁷ But the report of Mensdorff's advocacy of force spread far and wide.¹⁴⁸ This raised him in the estimation of the Austrian people and the diplomats of the German states.¹⁴⁹ Truly, the defeat of his proposal was not unfortunate for him nor for his country: to the one it gave prestige, to the other a year more of German primacy.

¹⁴⁵ Belcredi's phrase (*loc. cit.*, p. 18). Only ten days before, in closing the *Reichsrat*, the Emperor's speech had proclaimed to the world his desire for a settlement which should meet the interest of all Germany and take account of Austria's position in the Confederation (*Staatsarchiv* X, p. 51). Biegeleben had insinuated in the press that this declaration had "personally bound" Franz Joseph (*Allgemeine Zeitung*, No. 211, Vienna July 29, 1865).

¹⁴⁶ Such was the impression of Franz Joseph's cousin, Albert of Saxony (Hassel II, p. 214). Cf. Friesen p. 130.

¹⁴⁷ There was no appreciable change in the foreign situation. If the German states were more suspicious of Austria after Gastein, they discovered in 1866 that they could do nothing else but take her part.

¹⁴⁸ The newspapers spoke of it openly, and Mensdorff himself seems to have taken no trouble to conceal his stand from the *Mittelstaaten* (Edelsheim to Roggenbach, August 6, No. 139; August 10, No. 141, BGL); from Beust (Vitzthum p. 91; Vogt p. 73); and from the Russian, Count Stackelberg (Werther to Bismarck, August 5, tg. No. 256, AGEV; Sybel IV, pp. 125-126). To Werther, however, Mensdorff declared "that he always preferred a direct understanding with us whenever possible, without the doubtful support of the secondary states, which however would not be scorned *en cas de besoin*." (Werther to Bismarck, letter of August 8, HAA).

¹⁴⁹ Roggenbach to Friedrich, August 16 (Oncken: *Grossherzog Friedrich I. von Baden* I, p. 488); Varnbüler (*Origines* VI, p. 405).

No one accepted the compromise gladly. It was a counsel of despair, else why should it unite two men like Belcredi and Esterhazy? The Bohemian Count was strongly anti-Prussian, almost anti-German, and penetrated Bismarck's policy with eyes as suspicious as Biegeleben's.¹⁵⁰ The Hungarian Count clung to the conservative Prussian alliance, trusting in Bismarck's magic pictures of the future war against France and Italy. The former welcomed a breathing spell to prepare for the inevitable war with Berlin; the latter desired a further opportunity to secure compensations from Prussia by peaceful means.¹⁵¹ In spite of this, Blome interpreted the result of the council as a victory of the "war party" over the party of peace and alliance!¹⁵² One thing was certain: the "inevitable" war with Prussia had now become a very real fact to all, and even to the Emperor himself.¹⁵³

"If we succeed upon this road in reaching next spring without further complications," wrote Blome, "then much—very much—is gained. At that time, further action will depend on the general world situation, the internal conditions of the monarchy, the feeling in the Duchies . . . and in Germany. Perhaps a longer temporizing will still be the best, perhaps it would be better to bring about a rupture with Prussia; perhaps Prussia will be forced to grant a solution in the national sense, perhaps the altered conditions and the direction of public opinion will permit the accomplishment of quite another settlement hand in hand with Prussia."¹⁵⁴

These last words reflected his own expectation and that of

¹⁵⁰ There are numerous instances in the protocols of the council, and in his "Fragments." For instance, in the summer of 1864 he found von Roon inspecting fortresses in Bohemia and called the fact to the attention of the Vienna authorities—but without result, as he complains (Belcredi, *loc. cit.*, p. 10).

¹⁵¹ Esterhazy had not given up hope of a money compensation (Belcredi p. 8), and he was extremely anxious, of course, to clear the track for the negotiations with Hungary.

¹⁵² Blome's No. 2 (Appendix A, No. 9): "But if it lies in our intentions to save the possibility of a conflict with Prussia, then the *provisorium* offers better chances than my plan"; and Blome's remark to Hofmann (Manteuffel to Bismarck, October 8, 1865, HAA).

¹⁵³ Cf. his words to the Grand Duke of Hesse-Darmstadt (see below in this chapter).

¹⁵⁴ Blome's No. 2 (Appendix A, No. 9).

Moriz Esterhazy,¹⁵⁵ and it can hardly be a mistake to see in "His Gray Eminence" the spiritual father of the agreement of Gastein.¹⁵⁶

In conceding the divided administration, the council marked it as the utmost limit of concessions. Rather than retreat farther, they would accept a rupture with all its consequences.¹⁵⁷ The remaining terms of Blome's minutes were readily agreed to, probably with the recommendation that Austria's federal obligations should be emphasized wherever possible. Instructions were given to draft an agreement on this basis, with which Count Blome would return to Gastein in a last effort to appease the Prussians.¹⁵⁸

August 7 and 8 were consumed in drawing up the draft-convention, as well as full powers for Blome, and a letter from the Emperor to the King. As these were tasks for Biegeleben's skilled pen, the *Referent* and his colleagues in the *Ballplatz* were now admitted to the baneful secret.¹⁵⁹ Biegeleben

¹⁵⁵ For Blome: his later remark to Reuss: "He had hoped that a great European conflict would be awaited in order to cede the Duchies to Prussia in a manner worthy of Austria. In this sense, and in the hope that the question would not be settled precipitately, he had construed the Gastein Convention" (Reuss to Bismarck, February 21, 1866, HAA). This feeling was reflected in the *Hofburg* (Hassel II, p. 214), which was always hoping for some lucky accident to change the constellation in Austria's favor: the death of Napoleon, the fall of Bismarck ("Bismarck e un passeggero," said Belcredi to Malaguzzi; Luzio: *Francesco Giuseppe e l'Italia*, p. 26), or the collapse of the new Italy.

¹⁵⁶ On August 18, the Emperor's birthday, Count Esterhazy was presented with the Grand Cross of St. Stephen, as proof of Franz Joseph's "vollen Anerkennung und Zufriedenheit mit seinen treuen und eifrigen Diensten." (*Allgemeine Zeitung*, No. 232, Vienna, August 18) Belcredi says expressly that Esterhazy was strongly in favor of the convention (*loc. cit.* p. 8).

¹⁵⁷ Werther to Bismarck, August 9, tg. No. 261 (HAA).

¹⁵⁸ Edelsheim to Roggenbach, August 6, No. 139 *Vertraulich* (BGL).

¹⁵⁹ Friedjung I, p. 123 should be corrected on this point. Mensdorff also told the secret of the divided administration on August 5 to Edelsheim (Edelsheim to Roggenbach, August 6, No. 139 *Vertraulich*, BGL), to Bloomfield on August 15 (Bloomfield to Russell, August 15, No. 173 Confidential, F. O. 7 Austria 685), and wrote it in ambiguous terms to Metternich on August 11 (HHS). Someone revealed it to favored press-correspondents in Vienna on August 13 (cf. *Allgemeine Zeitung*, August 15, No. 227, Vienna August 13). Bismarck complained with good reason of these breaches of secrecy (Blome to Mensdorff, letter of August 15).

was "thunderstruck" at the victory of the partition principle, against which he had so consistently fought since its first appearance at Schönbrunn.¹⁶⁰ But he trusted himself to prevent further yielding to Prussia. In his draft of the imperial letter, he inserted references to the "unedifying" principle of division, and some "doubt as to the practicability" of the proposed treaty,—expressions which Franz Joseph wisely scratched out.¹⁶¹ In the draft convention itself, however, Biegeleben displayed no trace of animus,¹⁶² and in clarity and vigor of expression it far outstrips the involved and cumbrous draft which Bismarck was meanwhile preparing in Gastein.¹⁶³ Blome was instructed to come to the best arrangement he could upon Lauenburg,¹⁶⁴ but to refer other essential changes to Vienna for approval.¹⁶⁵ With these instructions and documents he left Vienna on the afternoon train, August 8.¹⁶⁶

* * * * *

The Austrians were by no means certain that Bismarck would accept the temporary partition without coupling to it demands which they could not approve.¹⁶⁷ Franz Joseph therefore, on the advice of Archduke Albrecht, ordered the strategists of the war ministry to draw up a plan of defense

¹⁶⁰ Werther to Bismarck, tg. No. 261, August 9 (HAA); R. von Biegeleben p. 294.

¹⁶¹ Draft letter in Biegeleben's hand, with corrections by Franz Joseph (HHS); original in Franz Joseph's hand, dated Vienna, August 7, 1865 (HAA).

¹⁶² Biegeleben's draft is not to be found either in Vienna or Berlin archives. It is known only from a copy in HAA, in the script of two Prussian copyists, labelled, "Abschrift des ersten, von Graf Blome mitgebrachten Oesterreichischen Entwurfes." It had nine articles and one *Separatartikel*, concerning Ulm.

¹⁶³ Two different versions in Bismarck's hand are known. The less polished version (probably the first) is printed in *Bismarck-Jahrbuch* IV, pp. 196-199. It contains nine articles and one "Secret Article." The latter is omitted from the more polished version (*G. W. V.*, pp. 262-264). Thimme seems to have taken the two drafts to be identical.

¹⁶⁴ Blome to Mensdorff, August 14, No. 1.

¹⁶⁵ Deduced from subsequent negotiations and telegrams.

¹⁶⁶ Werther to Bismarck, August 8, tg. No. 259; R. von Biegeleben p. 294.

¹⁶⁷ Cf. Mensdorff to Metternich, letter of August 11.

against a sudden invasion of Bohemia.¹⁶⁸ And Mensdorff scanned more eagerly the reports from Paris, and continued his *pourparlers*. Metternich's despatches were full of "good news."¹⁶⁹ Drouyn had repeated the usual warnings to Italy,¹⁷⁰ and Eugénie had shown the ambassador a letter from the Emperor himself, promising the strictest neutrality and denying aid for Italy.¹⁷¹ The Empress gave her word "that in case Prussian proposals were made which might seem acceptable to the Emperor she would openly and quickly warn me."¹⁷² Mensdorff expressed his gratification to Gramont, and went so far as to add: "Like Prussia, we look for friends and allies wherever we may find them."¹⁷³ These were not empty phrases, for Mensdorff remembered Drouyn's January hints, and contemplated asking for "the active aid of France, if the German secondary states did not offer us a sufficient measure of support."¹⁷⁴ That Metternich actually went so far

¹⁶⁸ E. von Glaise-Horstenau: *Franz Joseph's Weggefährte, Das Leben des Generalstabschefs Grafen Beck* p. 89.

¹⁶⁹ So Mensdorff and Franz Joseph remarked to Beust (*Origines* VI, p. 422).

¹⁷⁰ *Origines* VI, p. 366 f.

¹⁷¹ Metternich to Mensdorff, August 5, tg. No. 46: Napoleon wrote, "Dites au Prince Metternich que mes intentions ne sont nullement hostiles à son Gouvernement et que quoiqu'il arrive, je garderai la plus stricte neutralité. A Berlin on doit savoir que l'Italie ne bougera qu'à ses risques et périls et n'aurait rien à attendre de moi." (Incompletely quoted by Oncken: *Die Rheinpolitik* I, p. 54 note 1).

¹⁷² Metternich to Mensdorff, letter of August 7 (summary from protocol-book, HHS. The letter itself is missing).

¹⁷³ *Origines* VI, p. 388 f. (Interview about August 7 or 8).

¹⁷⁴ Mensdorff to Metternich, letter of August 11. In this letter, Mensdorff revealed the partition scheme in ambiguous phrases, which Metternich (and Goltz, to whom the letter was shown) took to mean *complete* partition. Metternich broached this latter to Drouyn, as an idea of his own. But Drouyn suspected the truth and opposed the plan strongly (*Origines* VI, p. 411 f.). Goltz reported these events to Bismarck (Oncken I, p. 56 ff.), who was naturally chagrined at the disclosure. Mensdorff also sent Metternich an intercepted tg. from Goltz (August 10) reporting a conversation with Eugénie at Fontainebleau, from which Mensdorff had discovered "that [France] was far from discouraging Prussia and that they are holding the balance fairly evenly between us."

as this, and was rejected, as Napoleon later insinuated to Bismarck,¹⁷⁵ is not confirmed by any evidence.

But the news from the lesser capitals, too, was daily more encouraging. While the minister council was debating war and peace, Baron Beust put in an appearance in Vienna, with a plan for unified action.¹⁷⁶ It was the old idea long held in the *Ballplatz*: the submission of the Schleswig-Holstein question to the Diet,—with a new ending. If the majority of the German states did *not* rally to Augustenburg, Austria should declare her duty fulfilled, and withdraw from the Duchies with dignity.¹⁷⁷ Mensdorff looked with favor upon the idea of united action in Frankfurt, but disliked the new *dénouement*, for it would simply play into Prussia's hands. He suggested that, if the majority did not follow, then Austria should have regard solely to her own interests.¹⁷⁸ With this change Beust agreed, and left for Munich, reasonably satisfied with the Vienna attitude,¹⁷⁹ except for the impenetrable secrecy that surrounded Blome's propositions.¹⁸⁰ Shortly after he left, Baron Dalwigk renewed his offer of military aid,¹⁸¹ and for the first time, the assurance came from Varnbüler, that Austria could count on him in case of war.¹⁸² The

¹⁷⁵ Conversation at St. Cloud, November 3, 1865 (Sybel IV, p. 163; *G. W. V.*, p. 316).

¹⁷⁶ For Beust's mission to Vienna, see Vitzthum, pp. 89-92; *Origines* VI, p. 385 f.; Friesen II, pp. 125-126 (correct Friesen II, p. 128); Vogt pp. 72-73; Beust I, pp. 403-404; Ebeling II, pp. 297-299 (to be used with caution); Edelsheim to Roggenbach, August 10, No. 141, BGL (reporting Beust's own account of his interviews). The Beust-Vitzthum memorandum is printed in Vitzthum pp. 94-100.

¹⁷⁷ Vitzthum p. 99.

¹⁷⁸ Vogt p. 73; Edelsheim to Roggenbach, August 10, No. 141 (BGL). (Correct Vitzthum p. 91). Biegeleben and Wydenbrugg agreed with Mensdorff's alteration (Vogt p. 73 note 1).

¹⁷⁹ Edelsheim to Roggenbach, August 10, No. 141 (BGL).

¹⁸⁰ He considered the choice of Blome a "*Missgriff*" (*Ibid.*).

¹⁸¹ Dalwigk offered "men and money" (Brenner to Mensdorff, August 5, No. 1), and promised to seize the fortress of Mainz if it came to war (Brenner to Mensdorff, August 8, No. 2).

¹⁸² Varnbüler told the Austrian chargé that he had recently asked Roggenbach point blank, if it came to war, "on which side will you stand . . . with

news from Munich, too, was better, for in reality the scales had at last fallen from Pfordten's eyes, and he began to sense Bismarck's purposes.¹⁸³ Chastened by the attack of his own press, which called for action against Prussia,¹⁸⁴ the Baron had overcome his mediation-urge sufficiently to take the first step in preparation for war.¹⁸⁵ Beust arrived on August 10, and put such spurs to him that he told Prussia flatly that Bavaria could not remain neutral in a conflict.¹⁸⁶ But his pride forbade him to show to Austria too rapid a transformation. While he hinted at his "military preparations," still the burden of his song (to Austria) was mediation.¹⁸⁷ He therefore was the least encouraging among the German statesmen upon whom Austria counted, and the *Ballplatz* unwisely was tempted to make him the scapegoat for the Gastein fiasco.¹⁸⁸

us or with Prussia?" Roggenbach replied, ". . . I can only stand on your side." (Wolkenstein to Mensdorff, letter of August 8). Cf. *Origines* VI, pp. 400, 405; VII, p. 139. That Baden's policy would really have been armed neutrality of the secondary states, is more probable (Oncken: *Grossherzog Friedrich I. von Baden* I, pp. 485, 488).

¹⁸³ *Origines* VI, p. 372. He felt compromised in his role of mediator by Bismarck's arrest of Frese and May, and complained to Reuss (Reuss to Bismarck, August 1, tg. No. 104, HAA).

¹⁸⁴ Zwierzina to Mensdorff, August 10, No. 49; Reuss to Bismarck, August 8, No. 109, HAA. Reuss wrote to Bismarck: "Der fast einstimmigen öffentlichen Meinung des Landes gegenüber, wird er [Pfordten] nie wagen sich auf preussischer Seite zu stellen" (letter of August 11, HAA).

¹⁸⁵ Vitzthum p. 93 f.; *Origines* VI, p. 390. Pfordten really only asked the war ministry to report on Bavaria's military strength in a war against Prussia (Doeberl: *Bayern und Deutschland im 19ten Jahrhundert*, p. 26).

¹⁸⁶ *Origines* VI, p. 421; Sybel IV, p. 140; Reuss to Bismarck, August 11, No. 112, and letter, HAA.

¹⁸⁷ Zwierzina to Mensdorff, August 10, No. 49. Through some mistake Pfordten seems not to have been informed of Austria's great concessions in note of July 10 (sent to Munich on July 15) until Mensdorff told Count Bray, about August 7. Pfordten was elated, and told Reuss that it was now time for Bismarck to give way. If Prussia does not do so, he said, "so müsse man freilich voraussetzen dass Preussen annexionistische Absichten verfolge und dieselben durch einen Krieg durchzusetzen entschlossen sei." (Reuss to Bismarck, August 8, No. 108, HAA). For Pfordten's ignorance of Austrian concessions, see Friesen II, p. 126. To the end, he continued to complain of Austria's secrecy, and the attacks of the Austrian press upon himself (Zwierzina to Mensdorff, August 13, No. 50).

¹⁸⁸ Cf. Mensdorff's words, *Origines* VII, p. 49. Pfordten saw through this scheme (Jansen-Samwer p. 799).

In so doing, they only aggravated the sensitive man and lessened the chance of his friendship for the definitive struggle with Prussia.

On the whole, the *Ballplatz* was treated better than it deserved, at this time. Without any appeal for their aid, several states had offered it voluntarily. The doubtful ones could not be expected to volunteer their forces without being asked and prepared for it, yet Mensdorff did not wish to commit himself to them before the rupture was certain. Unwittingly the minister discouraged some by his too frank confession of Austria's internal weakness and disarmament, financial distress and disunity in the new ministry.¹⁸⁹ To this parlous situation, Prussia's preparedness and Bismarck's bold determination stood in glaring contrast. With a little finesse, the *Ballplatz* could have prevented Pfordten's capitulation to Bismarck. In reality, the reserved attitude of Bavaria and other states played little part in the decision of the Austrian council to compromise with Prussia.¹⁹⁰ It was therefore morally and politically unpardonable to lay the blame upon them and upon Freiherr von der Pfordten.

Meanwhile, the success of Blome's second mission had rendered further overtures unnecessary. On August 12, in response to a question from Vienna, Blome wired, "The character of the *provisorium* is accepted with great readiness."¹⁹¹ Mensdorff drew in his feelers and awaited the conclusion of the agreement.¹⁹²

¹⁸⁹ Cf. Mensdorff's words to Könneritz (Friesen II, p. 123). For the effect of such remarks upon Roggenbach, see Oncken: *Friedrich von Baden* I, p. 484.

¹⁹⁰ See the discussion above. Zulauf's words (Oncken: *Friedrich von Baden* I, p. 484) were simply intended to secure all possible support for Austria.

¹⁹¹ Mensdorff to Blome, August 12, tg. 12:05 p. m.; Blome to Mensdorff, August 12, tg. 7:45 p. m.

¹⁹² Mensdorff began to retract on August 11. When Beust asked "whether he might continue his plans" (Zwierzina to Mensdorff, tg. August 11), Mensdorff replied, "Graf Blome gibt Hoffnung auf baldige Verständigung, was ich Baron Beust mitzuteilen bitte." (Mensdorff to Zwierzina, August 11, tg. 3:05 p. m.).

BLOME'S SECOND MISSION AND THE CONVENTION OF GASTEIN

During his second mission, Blome was in a stronger tactical position than Bismarck, for Franz Joseph had said his last word, whereas King William had become somewhat upset by Goltz' unfavorable reports from Paris.¹⁹³ Bismarck therefore received the envoy with open arms, accepted the temporary division in the first interview,¹⁹⁴ and showed his disposition to conclude an agreement with haste, so as to stop his war machinery.¹⁹⁵ This time, Blome stated his terms, and with minor changes Bismarck accepted them.¹⁹⁶ The Prussian gave way on his demand for Lauenburg without compensation and agreed to pay a price for it. And William gave up Roon's program of making Kiel a Prussian naval base, and permitted it to become a federal harbor, with Prussian "command and police." Blome also taxed Bismarck with his flirtation with Italy, and secured the promise that Prussia would drop the negotiations for a commercial treaty.¹⁹⁷ Bismarck repeatedly but unsuccessfully tried to induce Blome to accept a secret article by which "the present division of population, being disadvantageous to Prussia, should not prejudice a future final total partition, but rather, in that case, a compromise should be reached by adding a corresponding portion of Holstein to Schleswig."¹⁹⁸

¹⁹³ Goltz' report of August 4 (Oncken: *Rheinpolitik* I, pp. 48-51). On August 6, Goltz wrote further, that the arrest of Augustenburg would endanger an agreement with Napoleon, for French public opinion would turn strongly against the disturber of the peace, even on superficial suspicions (Goltz to Bismarck, August 6, No. 246, HAA. Cf. *Origines* VI, p. 397). For the depressing effect of these reports upon the King, see *G. W. V.*, pp. 289-290, and Brandenburg: *Untersuchungen und Aktenstücke* p. 435.

¹⁹⁴ On August 10 (Blome to Mensdorff, August 14, No. 1).

¹⁹⁵ His decision for peace was thus taken on August 10, not as Sybel (IV, p. 137) implies, after the convention had been drawn up ready for signature.

¹⁹⁶ For this second mission, Sybel had almost no sources to guide him, hence the meagerness of his account (IV p. 135 ff.). For a fuller account, from the Austrian documents, see Wertheimer: *Bismarck im politischen Kampf*, pp. 171-178, but some of his conclusions must be read with caution, pp. 179-181. His praise of Count Blome's achievement is a just judgment of that skilful negotiator.

¹⁹⁷ Blome to Mensdorff, August 11, tg. sent at 8:35 (a. m.?).

¹⁹⁸ Blome to Mensdorff, August 14, No. 1. Cf. *G. W. V.*, p. 359.

On August 14, at noon, the "agreement"¹⁹⁹ was signed by the two negotiators, and on Bismarck's request it was to be kept secret until safely accepted by the two sovereigns.²⁰⁰ As Blome dried the ink on his signature, the Prussian minister broke the stillness with a laugh. "Well," he said, "I never should have expected to find an Austrian diplomat who would put his name to that!"²⁰¹ Doubtless the Austrian envoy too appreciated the irony in the fact that two-thirds of the convention came from the pen of Biegeleben,²⁰² the stoutest opponent of the partition of the Duchies, a principle which this agreement was the first and last to sanction in legal form.²⁰³ On the first anniversary of his victory at Schönbrunn, the *Geheimrat* suffered his worst personal defeat.

* * * * *

King William was jubilant. "Thank Heaven," he said, "at least this was a bloodless victory."²⁰⁴ Whether the King's satisfaction sprang from the fact that the sun of peace had broken through the clouds of war, or because he had just made his first contribution to the Hohenzollern tradition that each ruler must add to his patrimony,²⁰⁵—at least the latter

¹⁹⁹ Blome suggested this designation (*Übereinkunft*) as less pretentious than *Vertrag*, and requiring no formal ratification (Blome to Mensdorff, August 14, No. 1).

²⁰⁰ Blome to Mensdorff, August 14, tg. sent 12:40 p. m.: "Soeben unterzeichnet. Ich zweifle nicht dass Euer Excellenz mit der Textirung einverstanden sein werden. Herr von Bismarck wünscht Geheimhaltung der ganzen Angelegenheit bis nach Zusammenkunft vom 19ten in Salzburg. Abreise morgen früh auf Befehl Seiner Majestät über Ischl nach Wien."

²⁰¹ Vitzthum p. 101 (from Blome).

²⁰² The preamble and articles 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8 and 9 are Biegeleben's, with a few additions by Blome and Bismarck. Articles 2, 7, 10 and 11 are almost wholly in Bismarck's phraseology. Only a few touches can be traced to Abeken, specifically in article 2. (Cf. various drafts in HAA).

²⁰³ Strictly speaking, the first since the early administrative partitions of the 15th and 16th centuries.

²⁰⁴ Berner: *Kaiser Wilhelms des Grossen Briefe, Reden, und Schriften* II, p. III.

²⁰⁵ Cf. *Origines* VI, p. 350. Bismarck later said that the possession of Lauenburg gave the King a "taste for annexations." (*Gedanken und Erinnerungen* II, p. 34).

motif was dominant when, a month later, he created Bismarck a Count.²⁰⁶ The Junker premier himself rejoiced to escape from the "gloomy hole" of Gastein,²⁰⁷ whence he journeyed to Salzburg, to attend the long-awaited meeting of the two monarchs, on August 19.

The Emperor Franz Joseph, with Counts Mensdorff and Esterhazy, received the Prussians with formal cordiality and did not allow their feelings to cloud the festivities. Dinners and calls were the order of the day, where diplomats mingled with army officers, "Hoheits" with axes to grind,²⁰⁸ and Arch-dukes with nothing to do but nothing. On August 20, "a hot Sunday,"²⁰⁹ without any trumpeting, the Gastein agreement was approved by the sovereigns,²¹⁰ and Bismarck breathed more easily. With this consecration of Austro-Prussian *dis-*unity on the Schleswig-Holstein question, the ostensible object of the meeting had been accomplished.

But Franz Joseph prevailed upon his guests to visit him at near-by Ischl two days longer,²¹¹ where the discussions became more intimate and the entertainment warmer.²¹² To crown it all, actors were summoned from the imperial *Hofburg Theater* in Vienna to perform at an elaborate *théâtre paré*.²¹³ There in the midst of their *cortèges*, the boxes filled with scions of Austria's greatest families, crowns and coronets on every side, the rulers of the two largest German states celebrated their historic "reconciliation" with a classic performance of—"Herr Stuzlberger's 73 Cents!" ("which

²⁰⁶ *Anhang I*, p. 121.

²⁰⁷ *Bismarck's Briefe an seine Braut und Gattin* p. 566 f.

²⁰⁸ The Grand Duke of Oldenburg turned up at Salzburg, but was coldly received by the Austrians (Bloomfield to Russell, August 23, No. 181 Confidential. F. O. 7 Austria 685). The King of Bavaria and the Grand Duke of Hesse were among the visitors.

²⁰⁹ Abeken: *Ein Schlichtes Leben in Bewegter Zeit* p. 312.

²¹⁰ But not *formally* ratified, with signatures (*Allgemeine Zeitung*, No. 233, Augsburg, August 21 inspired).

²¹¹ It was also a visit of courtesy to the Empress (Keudell: *Fürst und Fürstin Bismarck* p. 221).

²¹² The secretaries were left behind in Salzburg (Abeken p. 312).

²¹³ *Allgemeine Zeitung*, No. 234, Salzburg, August 21.

seemed to please the Exalted Personages immensely," remarked a leading journal).²¹⁴ The following afternoon, King William and Bismarck bade their imperial host adieu and departed on a triumphal journey to sow dismay among the South German states.

Much had been left unsaid at Salzburg and Ischl. Exactly a year before, the two allies had tried to seek a solution of the Duchies question. Now it was hardly whispered. Bismarck seems to have hinted that the Lauenburg sale was a good precedent for Schleswig,²¹⁵ but Austrian ears, except Esterhazy's, were deaf.²¹⁶ The Prussians were no more successful in their attempt to annul some of their recent concessions to Blome.²¹⁷ With the best will in the world, Franz Joseph could not prejudice his position in Holstein by muzzling the press and *Vereins* with the old Danish laws, and by limiting Austria's military rights in the Duchies.²¹⁸ But he gladly agreed to suspend the calling of the Estates for the time being, and tactfully masked a withdrawal of his troops from Prussian command, by appointing the popular and able General Gablenz to be his *Statthalter* in Holstein.²¹⁹ The simultaneous announcement that General Manteuffel would go as governor to Schleswig, and the recall of Halbhuber,²²⁰ gave prospect for a real *détente* in the Duchies, — the more

²¹⁴ *Allgemeine Zeitung*, No. 237, Salzburg, August 23. An operetta "All Aboard" was also given!

²¹⁵ Blome to Mensdorff, August 14, No. 1.

²¹⁶ Belcredi, *loc. cit.* pp. 8-9. Cf. Appendix A, No. 6, below.

²¹⁷ I consider the five points, called secret clauses, in *Origines* VI, p. 435 f., to be concessions which the Prussians hoped to gain from the Emperor in personal contact: viz, the occupation of Kiel and Rendsburg by purely Prussian ships and troops respectively, the postponement of the meeting of the Estates, the installation of the severe Danish censorship laws, and the agreement that Augustenburg must act like a private citizen.

²¹⁸ Instructions to Gablenz, Vienna September 6, 1865.

²¹⁹ Lieutenant Field Marshal Ludwig von Gablenz had commanded the Austrian troops in the Danish war and was popular with the Prussians.

²²⁰ Halbhuber had four times submitted his resignation since January 1865, and after the Prussian arrest of Frese and May, had suggested that he be replaced by a general "with the means to make himself respected." (Meroux de Valois, July 29: *Origines* VI, p. 363).

so since the candidate whom Bismarck had threatened to expel at all costs, was now allowed to remain unmolested among his followers, "so long as he conducted himself only as a private citizen."²²¹ In addition, Mensdorff and Bismarck settled upon ways and means of dividing the administration and executing the convention.²²² While the Gablenz-Manteuffel combination bade fair to reduce the friction on the lower Elbe, yet plentiful gunpowder remained.²²³

Finally, the inevitable topic of monarchical interviews, the crusade for conservatism, absorbed much of the present conversations. Napoleon again came in for a drubbing,²²⁴ despite all the coquetry of which each chancellery had been guilty since Schönbrunn. Bismarck promised the Emperor, as he had Blome, not to press the German states into an engagement with Italy,²²⁵ but without difficulty extracted from Esterhazy and Mensdorff a verbal agreement to uphold conservative principles in Germany, hand in hand with Prussia.²²⁶ They insisted however on conformity to the federal

²²¹ Mensdorff to Gablenz, September 6. Beust said "that Austria was to be the jailer of Augustenburg!" (*Origines* VII, p. 61).

²²² For instance, the civil service was to be withdrawn from Schleswig, and centered in Altona. The University of Kiel and the Superior Court of Appeals remained common to both Duchies. The posts and telegraphs of Holstein were to return to the original status, etc. (Mensdorff to Halbhüser, August 24).

²²³ Bismarck claimed to have purposely left certain points, like the question of the Estates, unsettled (*Origines* VII, p. 58; *G. W. V.*, p. 286). Had Mensdorff himself wished to settle these matters, he surely would have brought them into the discussion. The sequel proved that Austria was wise to have kept a free hand in the calling of the *Stände* and the formation of a Holstein army.

²²⁴ *G. W. V.*, p. 284.

²²⁵ *G. W. V.*, p. 348. Bismarck already knew that Pfordten had decided to accept the treaty (*Origines* VI, p. 410), hence Bismarck only agreed to give up his *initiative*, not the treaty itself (Chotek to Mensdorff, November 20, No. 71B *Vertraulich*).

²²⁶ So Bismarck later claimed (Chotek to Mensdorff, November 11, No. 70). Mensdorff simply said to Bismarck that "Prussia could count on us if she acted in a conservative sense." Mensdorff considered that attacks on the Confederation were *not* conservative (Mensdorff to Chotek, November 29).

pact,²²⁷ — a reservation which Bismarck later forgot. Carried away by the spirit of the occasion, the Hungarian Count seems to have whispered to the Prussians that they would inevitably receive the coveted prize in the course of time.²²⁸ The monarchs parted good friends, little realizing that ere they should meet thus again six crowded years and two wars would have overturned the existing political arrangement in Europe.²²⁹

Yet they did not leave without *arrière-pensées*. William, like his minister, was still determined to win the Duchies "with or against Austria."²³⁰ Franz Joseph, in thanking the Grand Duke of Hesse for his offer of troops, said that the time might still come when he would need them.²³¹ The Prussians agreed among themselves to give Austria three months to show her true colors; if she turned her back on the Gastein-Salzburg principles, war was inevitable.²³² In short, the true meaning of the convention was generally recognized to be: "Peace and friendship — until further notice!"²³³

* * * * *

By common agreement, the full text of the new pact was disclosed to the other states through separate Austrian and Prussian circulars dated August 22.²³⁴ In his covering note,

²²⁷ Cf. Chotek to Mensdorff, January 2, 1866, No. 2B: "[Graf Bismarck] eingestand, wie S[eine] Excellenz der kais. Minister gleich bei dieser ersten Unterredung seine Reserven zu Gunsten des zu beachtenden Bundesrechtes gemacht habe. . . ."

²²⁸ Bismarck kept reminding Austria of such "promises." Esterhazy, even in February 1866, still expressed his belief that Prussia would eventually receive the Duchies (see Appendix A, No. 12).

²²⁹ Except for a brief greeting in 1867, they did not meet until 1871.

²³⁰ Bismarck to Goltz, August 16, No. 9 *Vertraulich* (G. W. V, p. 274; Brandenburg p. 437 note 1). Similar words to Roggenbach (Oncken: *Friedrich von Baden I*, p. 491) and Pfordten (Friesen II, pp. 146-147).

²³¹ *Die Tagebücher des Freiherrn von Dalwigk zu Lichtenfels* p. 183.

²³² Manteuffel to Bismarck, January 18, 1866 *Vertraulich* (HAA). Cf. Sybel IV, p. 141.

²³³ *Allgemeine Zeitung*, No. 232, Vienna August 18, 1865.

²³⁴ Prussian circular (G. W. V, p. 279 f.); the Austrian circular was sent on August 22 to the ten principal German courts. On August 23, a French translation of the convention was sent with a shorter circular, in French, to the sixteen principal courts outside of Germany. Already the day before

Biegeleben had to defend the principles against which he had fought. "The ideal partnership based on the treaty of Vienna," he wrote, "had to be transformed into a real partition of ownership, until further agreement" in order to save Germany and Europe from the throes of war.²³⁵ He had his tongue in his cheek when he wrote that the convention infringed no principle nor right, and prejudiced no final decision over the fate of the Duchies. He sought to break the inevitable shock in the German chancelleries by more personal and flattering notes to their chief ministers, in the following vein (note to Varnbüler):²³⁶

"The minister's confidential remarks impressed us with the full moral conviction, that in case our negotiations with Prussia failed, we might count not only upon the sympathies, but also on the active aid of Württemberg, as of other governments with like opinions. . . . I do not doubt that the Prussian court is under no illusion toward which side Württemberg's decision would incline, and that this fact contributed to strengthen Prussia's willingness to compromise. The relations of federal confidence between us and the Stuttgart cabinet, presided over with such insight and circumspection by Frh. von Varnbüler, should, we fervently hope, emerge from the recent crisis renewed and strengthened. . . ."

Shortly after, the Gastein agreement became public when it was submitted to the Diet, as an answer to the Bavarian resolution of July 27, which had requested information on the state of the Schleswig-Holstein negotiations. That this in-

(August 21), Mensdorff wired his envoys in Munich, Dresden, Hanover, Stuttgart, Karlsruhe, Cassel, and Darmstadt, to inform the respective ministers of four provisions. the partition, and the decisions as to Kiel, Rendsburg, and Lauenburg (tg. August 21, 3 p. m.). Thus Austria seems to have stolen a march on Bismarck. Mensdorff had wired these principal terms to the same seven envoys and Baron Kübeck (Frankfurt) on August 15, for their personal and confidential information (circular tg.). Both of these actions, if not direct breaches of Blome's promise to Bismarck, seem of questionable propriety.

²³⁵ His justifying arguments had all been suggested by Count Blome in his report from Gastein (Appendix A, No. 9).

²³⁶ Mensdorff to Handel, August 22; a similar note went to Darmstadt (Mensdorff to Brenner, August 22); still more cordial and full of gratitude was the note to Beust of Saxony (Mensdorff to Werner, August 23); more reserved, those to Bavaria (Mensdorff to Zwierzina, August 22) and to Baden (Mensdorff to Zulauf, August 22, HHS; and Oncken I, p. 489 note 3).

formation would satisfy no one in Vienna, or Berlin, or in Germany, Mensdorff had foreseen.²³⁷ The storm of indignation and protest which arose throughout the German press is well known.²³⁸ Less well known are the more objective comments of various public men, before the great wave of popular reprobation had swept them into its whirlpool. The English statesmen appreciated Austria's difficult position and were glad that war had been avoided.²³⁹ Beust at first thought the convention a check for Bismarck; ²⁴⁰ Varnbüler considered it far better than war, approved the Lauenburg sale, and saw victories for the Confederation in Kiel and Rendsburg.²⁴¹ Pfordten admitted to Blome (who spent a day in Munich *en route* to a well-earned vacation), that "a better way out could hardly have been found at this time," though he could not suppress the fear "that in half a year a new conflict would be provoked by Herr von Bismarck."²⁴² A further remark of the Bavarian knight-errant must be quoted for comparison

²³⁷ In remarking this to Lord Bloomfield, Mensdorff added. "... mutual concessions had been made, and time gained, which ought to be turned to good account, but judging from his knowledge of the disposition of the Prussian Government he had serious misgivings as to the future." (Bloomfield to Russell, August 17, No. 177 Confidential. F. O. 7 Austria 685). On August 28, undersecretary Meysenbug sent to the Austrian envoys a formal defense of the convention for insertion in the press and the Austrian press-bureau worked hard to counteract the hostile criticism.

²³⁸ Bandmann p. 50 ff.; Ruider: *Bismarck und die öffentliche Meinung in Bayern, 1862-1866*, p. 114 ff.; Stern IX, p. 425 f.; Sybel IV, p. 143 f.

²³⁹ Cf. Bloomfield to Russell, August 9, No. 163 Confidential (F. O. 7 Austria 685). Lord Napier had expressed his gratification to Bismarck (Napier to Russell, August 17, No. 225 Most Confidential. F. O. 64 Prussia 576). Lord Russell's remarks (*Origines* VI, p. 438). Lord Russell contemplated putting his not unfavorable impressions into a circular. But the Queen's bitter indignation at Bismarck (cf. *Letters of Queen Victoria*, second series, I, pp. 276-277) and the example set by the French circular of August 29 (*Staatsarchiv* IX, p. 293) finally forced Lord Russell into a strong denunciation of the convention (*Staatsarchiv* IX, p. 294).

²⁴⁰ *Origines* VI, p. 420.

²⁴¹ *Origines* VI, p. 455.

²⁴² Blome to Mensdorff, August 21, No. 52. Blome was sent to inform Pfordten personally of the terms, and found him more reasonable than he had anticipated. His only complaint was directed against the hostile press campaign of Austria.

with his previous actions and his subsequent policy six months later: "For the *Mittelstaaten*," he declared roundly, "war would have become a question of existence, and they would therefore never have hesitated to adhere firmly to Austria, with all their forces,"—brave words, in retrospect! ²⁴³

The Vienna statesmen were not displeased to read in many Prussian papers disappointment that the annexation had been sidetracked and that Augustenburg was still at large.²⁴⁴ Personal enemies of Bismarck, like Count Goltz, criticised the convention in private as more favorable to Austria than to Prussia.²⁴⁵ Radowitz even thought it "an Austrian triumph."²⁴⁶ But these comments were often based on incomplete knowledge of the details, and they were soon drowned in the almost universal reprobation.²⁴⁷ Strictly speaking, only those could justly complain who had been willing to fight,—and from this point of view, the Austrian public, certain German statesmen, and Count Mensdorff himself had the greatest right to criticize. Not a year was to elapse, however, before they should have a chance to prove the strength of their convictions anew. Meanwhile, the public at large was agreed that in the convention of Gastein, Prussia had gained her "revenge for Olmütz."

²⁴³ Compare them with Pfordten's hesitation in 1866 (see below, chapter xi).

²⁴⁴ Bandmann p. 51; Langwerth von Simmern: *Aus meinem Leben* (Berlin 1898) I, p. 275. Bismarck had ordered his press-bureau to sound a note of conciliation rather than of triumph (*G. W. V.*, p. 279).

²⁴⁵ *Origines* VII, p. 6.

²⁴⁶ *Aufzeichnungen und Erinnerungen aus dem Leben des Botschafters Joseph Maria von Radowitz* I, pp. 76-77.

²⁴⁷ Austrian criticism was tempered with an appreciation of the government's difficulties, so that "they are on the whole more disposed to resent the policy of Count Rechberg which in their estimation has led logically to the humiliation of Austria, than severely to blame the actual government for their part in a transaction rendered inevitable by the blunders of their predecessors." (Bloomfield to Russell, August 31, No. 194. F. O. 7 Austria 685).

CHAPTER IX

THE BREATHING SPELL

ATTEMPTS AT INTERNAL RECONSTRUCTION

THE most immediate benefit that Franz Joseph expected to secure from the convention of Gastein was a six months' respite from the shadow of war. For this relief he had paid dearly with the virtual abandonment of Schleswig to Prussia. It is the purpose of this chapter, in the first place, to show how the new Austrian cabinet used this costly truce to improve the internal situation and the international position of the monarchy, and, in the second place, to estimate the attitude of the ruler and his counsellors as the breathing spell drew to a close.

The most important plank in the government's reconstruction program was of course the reconciliation with Hungary.¹ The path was cleared for great changes by the suspension of the Schmerling constitution on September 20, a measure which raised a hornet's nest of criticism from the Austrian liberals, but brought secret congratulations to Franz Joseph from Berlin, Paris, and London.² All hopes for the strengthening of the monarchy were centered on the meeting of the Hungarian Diet, called for December. In that month Franz Joseph moved his Court to Budapest, where he remained till March 1866,—and it seemed to many German-Austrians that their sovereign had accepted Bismarck's advice to shift the center of gravity to Hungary.³ Franz Joseph's speech from the throne made concessions, but required that Deák come

¹ The various steps may be followed in detail in Redlich: *Das oesterreichische Staats- und Reichsproblem* II, pp. 403-500.

² Bismarck to Werther, September 24, tg. No. 256 (AGEV); Müllinen to Mensdorff, September 25, No. 42A; Wimpffen to Mensdorff, November 8.

³ His remark to Karolyi in December 1862.

more than half way to meet him. This Deák declined to do. His reply of February 8, and his great speech a fortnight later destroyed hopes of an immediate compromise. A crisis arose in the Austrian cabinet, and the Vienna public cried loudly against Deák's demand for a separate Hungarian ministry.⁴ On March 3, the Emperor's reply closed the direct negotiations for the time being, though the rupture was not unfriendly nor final.

The Emperor and his ministers returned to their capital with empty hands, yet the monarch was in a stronger position by reason of the negotiations with Deák.⁵ The cabinet no longer needed to fear a Hungarian revolution; it could count on a loyal Magyar nation, should war break out in Germany or Italy.⁶

In financial reconstruction, too, the Belcredi government achieved a modicum of success. To be sure, it had no definite and well-considered program. But taking "retrenchment" as its motto, a commission had been set up to control and pare down expenses; it had made a beginning with the army, and was trying to do more.⁷ This effort toward economy was of course an absolute prerequisite for securing the necessary loan. The Viennese Baron Rothschild refused to provide the money except on conditions too onerous for the Emperor.⁸ When a public subscription failed,⁹ great efforts were made to interest the bankers of Paris and London. Lord John Russell volunteered to make a private appeal to the English Lord Rothschild, but met with no success.¹⁰ The French financiers wanted to extort ruinous concessions. Finally,

⁴ Bloomfield to Clarendon, February 22, 1866, No. 57 (F. O. 7 Austria 704).

⁵ Gramont to Drouyn, February 24, 1866 (*Origines* VII, p. 328).

⁶ Redlich II, p. 480; *Origines* VII, p. 328. Werther tried to leave no doubt on this point in Bismarck's mind (Werther to Thile, letter of February 1, 1866, PGS: *Nachlass Manteuffel*).

⁷ Beer: *Die Finanzen Oesterreichs* p. 334; Bloomfield to Russell, letter of September 7, 1865 (F. O. 356 Bloomfield Papers 39).

⁸ Summary of these negotiations in the *Times*, No. 25,343, Vienna, November 15.

⁹ Beer pp 333-334.

¹⁰ Wimpffen to Mensdorff, despatch and letter of November 8, 1865.

Napoleon himself intervened and persuaded the *Bourse* to admit an Austrian loan to public subscription in Paris.¹¹ Thus the arch-enemy proved the savior of Austria's finances, though the monarchy paid a staggering price for the funds it finally secured.¹²

The political consequences of the French loan were far more important than the economic. The money proved hardly a drop in the bucket of Austria's needs, and within a few months the finance minister was again at his wits' end.¹³ But the fact that Napoleon had personally aided the Danube monarchy, raised its waning prestige at one stroke, especially in the eyes of the disillusioned *Mittelstaaten*. Moreover, the French people, by joining in the loan, became materially interested to a certain extent in Austria's welfare, as opposed to Prussia's. In newspapers and pamphlets advertising the loan, the Austrian finances were pictured in glowing colors,¹⁴ —all of which provided grist for Austria's mill.

While engaged in solving these constitutional and financial problems, the ministry also strove for freer commercial relations with Italy, France, and Great Britain. Austrian manufacturers, particularly in Venetia and the Tyrol, wanted to reopen the vast markets of the Italian peninsula to their wares.¹⁵ Not averse to a measure which would gain the sympathy of the Emperor Napoleon, Mensdorff offered to open the entire Austro-Italian frontier to Italian goods on the basis of the existing treaty of 1851 with Sardinia, hoping for reciprocity from the La Marmora government.¹⁶ The *Quai*

¹¹ Metternich to Mensdorff, December 2, No. 49B.

¹² The Austrian treasury received only 61¼ gulden for 100 (Beer p. 333). Further details in Plener: *Erinnerungen* I, pp. 47-48.

¹³ Cf. Larisch's words in council of April 21, 1866 (Appendix A, No. 17).

¹⁴ Metternich to Mensdorff, December 2, No. 49B; *Origines* VII, p. 210; Plener I, p. 48.

¹⁵ Beer: *Die Oesterreichische Handelspolitik* p. 371.

¹⁶ *Ibid.* p. 379. The first overtures were made through the finance prefect of Venice to the Italian finance minister, but were rejected on September 24, 1865. A subsequent attempt was made through French and English mediation (Mensdorff to Müllinen, October 25; *Origines* VII, pp. 233 f., 250 f.; Bloomfield to Clarendon, January 11, 1866, No. 13. F. O. 7 Austria 703).

d'Orsay passed the word along to Florence, but found the Italians "deaf and crazy," as Metternich expressed it.¹⁷ They were not interested unless the official proclamation should use the terms "King of Italy" and "Kingdom of Italy" without reservation.¹⁸ Nevertheless, in February 1866, the Austrian cabinet made good its offer by a simple proclamation, though in no way altering its tone toward its southern neighbor.¹⁹ But the Italians naturally refused to reciprocate, and thus Austrian commerce was cheated of the expected benefits.

Somewhat greater political advantages were the result of simultaneous commercial negotiations with England and France. These powers had long been clamoring for the Austrian market, and Mensdorff and Baron Wüllerstorff, the minister of commerce, wished to grant them most-favored-nation treaties. While these men had in view the ultimate benefits of free trade for Austria, yet, as Mensdorff confessed, his immediate object was one of diplomacy.²⁰ Loud and insistent outcries from the manufacturing interests, many of whom were liberals opposed to the Belcredi ministry, did not swerve the Emperor. In December, Mensdorff concluded a treaty with Great Britain, which placed the latter (from January 1, 1867) upon the same footing as the German *Zollverein*, and looked forward to even lower tariffs in the future.²¹ At the same time, the long-postponed negotiations were begun with

¹⁷ Metternich to Mensdorff, December 2, No. 49D.

¹⁸ *Origines* VII, p. 251.

¹⁹ On February 16, 1866 Austria issued a custom-house ordinance assuring Italy of the benefit of the treaty being negotiated between France and Austria. If Italy wanted immediate benefits, she should request them through France (*Origines* VII, p. 303). If Italy did not grant reciprocity, Austria intended to withdraw the commercial privileges offered (Mensdorff to Metternich and Apponyi, February 15, 1866).

²⁰ Bloomfield to Clarendon, letter of November 30 (F. O. 356 Bloomfield Papers 39).

²¹ Beer: *Die Oesterreichische Handelspolitik* p. 333. These negotiations may be followed in Lord Bloomfield's reports during November and December, and in *Memoirs and Letters of Sir Robert Morier* II, pp. 12-17.

France, and thus another effective bid was made for the friendship of the western powers.²²

ATTEMPTS AT EXTERNAL RECONCILIATION

These commercial arrangements formed but one link in the diplomatic chain by which Count Mensdorff attempted, during the six months' respite, to bind Great Britain and France more closely to Austria.

Early in November, Count Wimpffen was sent to London to exchange views privately with Lord John Russell, and to consolidate "an even closer *entente*" with the British government.²³ The object was to capitalize the British desire for peace, as a check to Prussia and Italy, and even against Napoleon. Shortly after, Franz Joseph had the good fortune to see the most pro-Austrian of contemporary British statesmen, Lord Clarendon, succeed to the ministry of foreign affairs, when Russell took the premiership made vacant by the death of Palmerston. In the back of Count Mensdorff's mind there doubtless resided the vague hope that proud Albion would act as a counterpoise on Napoleon's flank, if France should eventually side against Austria in a general European war.²⁴ But for the present, at least, Count Wimpffen discovered that "the bonds which unite England and France are stronger than ever."²⁵ The path to London, he warned, lay through Paris.

The road to Paris had already been trod by no less a person than Count Bismarck, for purposes known only to himself (but strongly suspected by others), barely six weeks after the reaffirmation of the alliance with Austria. In those mysterious interviews at Biarritz and St. Cloud, the foresighted

²² Beer gives no hint of the French negotiations, but a few clues are to be found in *Origines* VI, p. 323; VII, pp. 181, 217. On February 1, Lord Bloomfield reported that the Austro-French *pourparlers* had run into difficulties (Bloomfield to Clarendon, February 1, No. 16, F. O. 7 Austria 719).

²³ Wimpffen to Mensdorff, letter of November 8, 1865.

²⁴ Cf. Mensdorff's words to Bloomfield before Gastein (see above, chapter vii).

²⁵ Wimpffen to Mensdorff, letter of November 8.

premier had convinced Napoleon of the hollowness of that same alliance. He had also succeeded in eliciting from the wary Emperor the important admission, "that an understanding between [France] and Austria at [Prussia's] expense, though often sought by Austria, had no prospect of succeeding, because all basis for it was lacking."²⁶ With this statement in his pocket, Bismarck hoped to allay William's fears, and encourage him to break with Austria. Directly upon his return from Berlin, Bismarck had mapped out the winter campaign: (in the words of his undersecretary von Thile) — "Tread on Austria's corns, present her with a categorical 'either — or,' close an alliance with Italy, castrate the Augustenburger, violate the chastity of the Diet, and other similar atrocities."²⁷ It was quite in line with this program that this year of infidelity, which had begun with the disclosure to Benedetti of the secret heart of the alliance protocol (article 5),²⁸ should close with the completion of the *Italo-Zollverein* treaty, so long fostered by Bismarck. To the grief of legitimists, all the German states but Hanover and Nassau therewith recognized the new kingdom south of the Alps.

The attitude of "the Man on the Seine" since the crisis of August had not displeased the *Ballplatz*. Franz Joseph had noted with pleasure the friendly reception given to his manifesto of September 20 by the French press,²⁹ the cooler reception given to Bismarck at Biarritz,³⁰ the general popularity of Austria among the French people,³¹ and on top of all,

²⁶ Bismarck to Goltz, letter of May 6, 1866 (*G. W. V.*, p. 486). The above version is probably more correct than that telegraphed to the King (*G. W. V.*, p. 316), because intended for Napoleon's own ear.

²⁷ J. Sass: "Hermann von Thile und Bismarck," in *Preussische Jahrbücher* CCXVII, 1929, Heft 3, p. 265.

²⁸ *Origines* VI, pp. 3-4. Bismarck, however, withheld the circumstances and date of birth of the alliance.

²⁹ On orders from Drouyn de Lhuys (Mülinen to Mensdorff, September 25, No. 42A). Cf. Drouyn's circular, September 29 (*Origines* VII, p. 94 ff.).

³⁰ The Austrians liked to think that he had been rebuffed (Mülinen to Mensdorff, November 6, 1865, No. 47).

³¹ Kalnoky to Mensdorff, London, October 11, No. 36B (words of the French chargé in London).

Napoleon's personal support of the Austrian loan.³² Yet the Court, to whom the Bonaparte dynasty was as repugnant as ever, still harbored the deepest suspicions of everything French. Mensdorff had maintained an attitude of friendly reserve, and had refused "to send anyone to Biarritz as Bismarck had done to keep the Emperor in good humor."³³ Count Bismarck's own trip thither began to savor of unfaithfulness to the alliance, but the most unkindest cut of all came in December with Bismarck's breach of his promise not to press the German states toward the recognition of Italy.³⁴

These unpleasant incidents, and the assistance that Napoleon had given to Austrian rehabilitation, released Franz Joseph's conscience from too punctilious scruples toward his ally. In December, when Metternich left for the annual visit to Compiègne, the *Ballplatz* was worried by the recent electoral gains of the party of action in Italy. For the more probable chance of a Garibaldian attack on Venetia, Count Mensdorff wanted again to obtain Napoleon's assurances that he would refrain from interfering with Austrian chastisement of Italy.³⁵ The ambassador found the Emperor discontented at the turn of events in the peninsula, but anxious to give Austria confidence in his own peaceful intentions.³⁶ He commended Franz Joseph's attempt to satisfy the Hungarians, and told Drouyn, who repeated it to Metternich, that he would rejoice to see Austria restored to her once powerful position.³⁷

As always, his minister for foreign affairs spoke even more frankly:

"If the Italians attack you," said Drouyn, "you will annihilate them with a single blow and we shall only have to establish in Italy a final arrangement of things, in concert with you,—it is also clear, that once

³² Mensdorff to Metternich, letter of November 29.

³³ Bloomfield to Russell, letter of September 7 (F. O. 356 Bloomfield Papers 39). Count Goltz spent September in close proximity to the imperial couple.

³⁴ See below, pp. 329-330.

³⁵ Mensdorff to Metternich, December 12, No. 1.

³⁶ Mensdorff to Metternich, December 2, No. 49C.

³⁷ *Ibid.*; Metternich to Mensdorff, December 17, No. 51.

Italy is reduced to her true expression and unable to cast covetous eyes upon neighboring territories, you will have every reason to grant Venetia the autonomy and the benefits that you are according to the other provinces of the Empire."³⁸

A little later Drouyn repeated that

if Austria were attacked in Italy "not only would we allow you freedom of action, but a complete *entente* can be established between us upon a final solution of the Italian question. Likewise if the convention concerning Rome were not respected by the Italians. . . ."³⁹

No more explicit reply to Mensdorff's query could have been given. But the minister went farther:

"We want no new annexations," he assured the ambassador, we have become frankly conservatives—that means we resemble you very much. *Qui se ressemble s'assemble*. . . . Events may . . . compel us to seek a power with whom we can combine our forces to make common cause against the danger."⁴⁰

Metternich glowed with new hope; he glimpsed the basis for an alliance very advantageous for both powers in the near future,—and he advised Mensdorff "to make the most of the opportunity without delay and avoid the habitual reproach that Austria can never make up her mind in time. . . ."⁴¹ While the ambassador's *exposé* was too enthusiastic, his advice was good.

The *Ballplatz* was delighted with the French assurances. Mensdorff noted that Napoleon would let Austria whip the Italians under certain circumstances,⁴² and therefore no longer felt concern over a crisis which would bring about a "better" condition of things in Italy.⁴³ But he feared that Metternich's zeal would carry him too far, and in a second despatch, he cooled the ambassador down:

³⁸ Metternich to Mensdorff, December 2, 1863, No. 49D.

³⁹ Drouyn had just seen Napoleon (Metternich to Mensdorff, December 17, No. 51).

⁴⁰ Metternich to Mensdorff, December 22, No. 52C.

⁴¹ Metternich to Mensdorff, December 2, No. 49B.

⁴² Mensdorff to Metternich, December 7.

⁴³ Mensdorff to Metternich, December 12, No. 1.

"The question of Venetia, the recognition of Italy, the matter of a guarantee for the Pope which might imply a renunciation of the stolen provinces, these are . . . the obstacles which keep us at present from an *entente* with France,"

and Metternich was forbidden to touch upon them in Paris, unless and until a general conflict was really imminent.⁴⁴

Shortly after, however, the envoy achieved a difficult and splendid stroke, when he persuaded his sovereign to send the Grand Cross of St. Stephen to the young heir of the Bonapartes, with a letter to Napoleon in the imperial hand and seal.⁴⁵ This public mark of friendship, allaying as it did the suspicion of Franz Joseph's personal aloofness,⁴⁶ and drawing a friendly reply,⁴⁷ made an excellent impression in the *Tuileries*, and was remarked throughout Europe. Bismarck, however, could not refrain from having his little joke at Austria's expense. He instructed Goltz to insert in the French newspapers the notice that Austria had not presented her highest decoration, whereas the Prince Imperial already possessed the highest Russian order!⁴⁸

As Bismarck had not yet shown his hand in the Duchies, Mensdorff and Esterhazy still hoped that the German struggle could be averted. They therefore proceeded with caution, and burned no bridges on one side or the other, but clung to the principle formulated by Rechberg in 1862, to refrain from seeking the French alliance until driven to it in order to prevent a combination of France and Prussia.⁴⁹ Meanwhile Metternich was asked to keep Napoleon in good humor,⁵⁰ and to

⁴⁴ Mensdorff to Metternich, December 12, *Réservée*.

⁴⁵ Draft letter, Vienna, December 22, 1865, in hand of Baron Aldenburg. At first, Franz Joseph had planned to send a decoration only to the finance minister, Fould (Mensdorff to Metternich, letter of November 29).

⁴⁶ This was its real purpose, as Mensdorff told Bloomfield (Bloomfield to Clarendon, January 4, 1866, No 5. F. O. 7 Austria 703).

⁴⁷ Napoleon to Franz Joseph, autograph letter, The *Tuileries*, January 2, 1866 (original in HHS). Neither letter was as warm in tone as Vogt p. 84, indicates.

⁴⁸ Bismarck to Goltz, January 9, tg. No. 13, PGS.

⁴⁹ Hengelmüller: "Graf Alois Karolyi" in *Deutsche Revue* XXXVIII, 1913, Heft 3, p. 302.

⁵⁰ Mensdorff to Metternich, December 28, 1865.

continue the conversations in the *Quai d'Orsay* within proper limits.⁵¹

One diplomatic move could have freed the Kaiser and his ministers from their fears of Bismarck's plans, but that move was the most difficult of all for a Habsburg to make. Every Austrian knew that half the dangers that beset the monarchy would be dispelled, and the other half reduced in importance, if Italy were converted into a loyal friend. Yet probably a large majority would have approved the action of their Emperor in rejecting the overtures of Conte Malaguzzi, a private citizen of Modena, in November. This devoted champion of an Austro-Italian *entente*, backed by Victor Emanuel and La Marmora, secretly offered a billion *lire* for the cession of Venetia. A political alliance was to be consolidated by a commercial treaty, and the dynastic enmity healed by the marriage of Prince Humbert to the daughter of Archduke Albrecht, with recognition of complete equality between the two neighboring states.⁵² This handsome offer was open to acceptance from September 1865 to April 1866.⁵³ Liberals like the ex-minister Plener and Baron Wüllerstorff, personally favored the Malaguzzi plan.⁵⁴ The Archduke himself would not have stood in the way, if the interests of the dynasty demanded the sacrifice.⁵⁵ But other military men opposed for reasons of strategy.⁵⁶ Count Belcredi shuddered at the thought of legitimizing the "revolution."⁵⁷ The Emperor

⁵¹ Mensdorff to Metternich, January 6, 1866, *Réserve*; Esterhazy to Mensdorff, letter of February 10, 1866 (Appendix A, No. 12).

⁵² A. Luzio: "Die Missione Malaguzzi a Vienna nel 1865-1866 per la Cessione del Veneto," *Risorgimento Italiano* XV, 1922, pp. 125 ff., 414 ff.; XVI, 1923, p. 213 ff. This work supersedes all previous accounts, including Luzio: *Francesco Giuseppe e l'Italia*.

⁵³ Malaguzzi remained in Vienna until May 1866 (cf. police report, Vienna May 25, 1866, No. 1944/Pr., HHS), but the Italo-Prussian alliance of April 8 cut off the desire of the Italians to consummate the plan.

⁵⁴ Friedjung: *Historische Aufsätze* p. 313; Luzio, *loc. cit.* XV, p. 422; *Origines* VII, pp. 285-286.

⁵⁵ Luzio, *loc. cit.* XV, p. 175.

⁵⁶ Mensdorff's remark (Bloomfield to Russell, August 24, 1865, No. 182 Confidential. F. O. 7 Austria 685).

⁵⁷ He lectured Malaguzzi on "Legitimacy."

considered it beneath his honor to sell the province,⁵⁸ and Esterhazy and the Archduchess Sophie (both of whom may have given the *coup de grâce*) thought it a shameful abandonment of the Pope, if Austria renounced her last outpost in Italy without a struggle.⁵⁹

The same objections, save the point of the imperial honor, militated against the old project of an exchange of Venetia for the Danubian Principalities,⁶⁰ which was revived when a palace revolution in Bukarest forced the powers to establish a new regime on the lower Danube.⁶¹ The British ambassador in Vienna, who had vainly urged the Venetian sale during the Gastein crisis,⁶² now knocked again at the *Ballplatz* (January 1866). Mensdorff admitted that "the possession of Moldavia and Wallachia would be a fine addition in point of territory, but Austria had no desire to add to her discontented populations."⁶³ When the French Ambassador explored the possibility of a similar exchange for Bosnia, Serbia, and Herzegovina, Count Mensdorff retorted that "the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire was not on the order of the day,"—and he wired Metternich to "leave no doubt of the painful impression which such insinuations" made in Vienna.⁶⁴ Bismarck, who had revealed these schemes to Russia,⁶⁵ enjoyed

⁵⁸ Vitzthum von Eckstädt: *London, Gastein, und Sadowa*, p. 111; protocol of the council of February 21, 1866 (Appendix A, No. 14).

⁵⁹ Vitzthum p. 111; Mensdorff repeated the same argument (Werther to Bismarck, April 26, 1866, No. 125, HAA).

⁶⁰ See above, chapter i. In the present revival of the plan, Italy would purchase the Principalities from Turkey.

⁶¹ Mensdorff disliked extremely this new complication in Austria's rear, and expressed his desire to go hand in hand with Paris and London in settling the trouble as quickly and painlessly as possible (Mensdorff to Metternich, November 13, December 28).

⁶² Bloomfield to Russell, August 24, 1865, No. 182 Confidential (F. O. 7 Austria 685).

⁶³ Bloomfield to Clarendon, letter of January 18, 1866 (F. O. 356 Bloomfield Papers 39). The envoy surmised, however, that Mensdorff "would not be unwilling to take something in the direction of Herzegovina and Bosnia, if the Turkish Empire fell to pieces."

⁶⁴ Mensdorff to Metternich, March 16, 1866.

⁶⁵ *G. W. V.*, p. 382, No. 245.

the growls of Gorchakov,⁶⁶ which, coupled with the *Ballplatz*' rejection, soon dissipated the Italian hopes for a peaceful annexation of Venetia.

As we have seen in an earlier chapter,⁶⁷ the tap-root of Austrian intransigence toward Italy was the determination not to strengthen the new "monstrosity" which, they were certain, was headed for an early collapse. The conservatives watched and waited for the hand of God to drag from the stage the great French protector of Italy, so that in the ensuing upheaval the conditions of 1815 might be restored in the peninsula.⁶⁸ The foreign office itself, calculating less on Providence and more on Napoleon, trod a *via media*. As Mensdorff revealed to Lord Bloomfield:

"The Austrian Government did not believe in the accomplishment of the unification of Italy a bit more than they believed in the restoration of the Exiled Families.⁶⁹ France, he said, had no desire for the consolidation of the Italian Power under one sovereign, and ere many years were over he felt assured there would be some new Division of Italy, observing finally that it never could be the policy of Austria to have a powerful Italy at her door."⁷⁰

Such impressions of French desires for a tripartite rather than a unified Italy had been nourished by Napoleon before 1864,⁷¹ and were still hinted at by his foreign minister, as we have just seen. Any acts such as the official recognition of Victor Emanuel or the cession of Austria's last important Italian province, which would postpone the salubrious *débâcle*, were therefore firmly rejected.⁷² Not unless confronted by a

⁶⁶ Alexander wrote, "Inadmissible jusqu'à la guerre." (*G. W. V.*, p. 405).

⁶⁷ Chapter i.

⁶⁸ This was the dream of Count Esterhazy and his intimates in the *Hofburg* (Vitzthum p. 155).

⁶⁹ This renunciation of the restoration of the Habsburg princelings was a notable retreat in policy. Wüllerstorff echoed it (*Origines* VII, p. 286).

⁷⁰ Bloomfield to Russell, August 3, 1865, No. 158 Confidential (F. O. 7 Austria 685).

⁷¹ See above, chapter i.

⁷² Recognition rejected: Bloomfield to Russell, August 3, 1865, No. 158 Confidential (F. O. 7 Austria 685); Mensdorff to Metternich, December 12, 1865 *Réserve*.—Sale of Venetia rejected: Bloomfield, *Ibid.*; Mensdorff to

terrible alternative—the loss of Habsburg dominance in Germany—would Franz Joseph choose the lesser evil of a compromise with the southern foe. In March, 1863, he had nerved himself to hold out to Napoleon the distant prospect of a cession of Venetia *in the last resort*, but he had coupled with it two severe conditions: that he must have Silesia, and that France must keep hands off German territory.⁷³ Presumably these instructions were still reposing in Metternich's desk, ready to be drawn out at the proper time. But the ambassador waited in vain for the word from Vienna.⁷⁴

Meanwhile, however, in order not to alienate Italy's protectors in France and England, the *Hofburg* was willing to make certain innocuous gestures toward Victor Emanuel. In addition to the commercial concessions mentioned above, the "neighborly relations" at which Metternich had hinted to Napoleon a year earlier⁷⁵ were carried a step farther in December.⁷⁶ To the surprise of Gramont, the official *Wiener Zeitung* published the signatures of Franz Joseph and Victor Emanuel in neighborly proximity, without reservation, at the foot of the new international telegraph convention.⁷⁷ A

Müllinen, October 25, 1865 — Exchange of Venetia rejected. Bloomfield to Clarendon, letter of January 18, 1866 (F. O. 356 Bloomfield Papers 39); Mensdorff to Metternich, March 16, 1866, tg.

⁷³ Secret instructions for Metternich, March 21, 1863 (Appendix A, No. 1). The additional demand for Balkan territory seems to have been dropped since 1863.

⁷⁴ But in February 1866 he hinted at the Silesian exchange to Nigra (La Marmora: *Un Po' Più di Luce* p. 71). Metternich chafed under the inaction in Vienna (Metternich to Gablenz, letter of March 7, 1866).

⁷⁵ See above, chapter v.

⁷⁶ The clearest expression of this intention is in the words which Count Felix Wimpffen was authorized to address to Lord Russell in strictest confidence: "Perhaps with time, and under certain circumstances, a ground might also be found in the political field, upon which—granted the preservation of our possession—we might draw closer to Italy in a manner to satisfy the wishes . . . of Paris and London, provided the legal point of view were maintained in principle" (Wimpffen to Mensdorff, letter, London, November 8, 1865). Lord Russell greeted this nebulous hint as a "long-awaited ray of hope."

⁷⁷ This act was the more noteworthy since the treaty had been signed with a reservation expressly disavowing recognition of Italy (cf. *Origines* VII, p. 234).

month later, when the new Italian fleet called at Pola, the Austrian naval base in the Adriatic, its salute was returned by the Austrian fortress (also without reservation!).⁷⁸ In February the British ambassador was sanguine that, if the Italian government would cease its agitation in Venetia, political relations might be opened "at no distant period."⁷⁹ Unfortunately, Lord Bloomfield did not guess as correctly as Count Bismarck, who had already laid the cornerstone of a counter-alliance with Italy, when in January he had induced King William to present the Black Eagle to the Italian monarch. As usual, the *Hofburg* was too late and too half-hearted. By making at least a pretence of willingness eventually to recognize Italy, Austria might have kept the hesitant La Marmora out of Prussia's clutches for some weeks or months longer.

* * * * *

While the *Ballplatz* was thus feebly attempting to pile up credits for the future in Paris and London, the old question of ceding Schleswig-Holstein to Prussia in return for a compensation had been bruited in half hints and through strange indirect by-ways. Bismarck had repeated his tactics of March 1865: to General Gablenz he threw out the bait of Glatz and Hohenzollern, when the new *Statthalter* of Holstein passed through Berlin to assume his command.⁸⁰ He spurred his banker, Bleichröder, to offer more money in Vienna, he worked through Rothschild in Paris,⁸¹ and told the French and the English and all who would listen, that he hoped still to buy out Franz Joseph's interests in the Duchies.⁸² But

⁷⁸ So Mensdorff told Bloomfield (Bloomfield to Clarendon, January 25, 1866, No. 27. F. O. 7 Austria 703).

⁷⁹ Bloomfield to Clarendon, February 22, No. 63 (F. O. 7 Austria 704).

⁸⁰ Gablenz to Mensdorff, September 14, 1865, No. 1 *Vertraulich*.

⁸¹ Mérimée: *Lettres à Panizzi* II, p. 154, quoted by Stern IX, p. 432 note 1.

⁸² Sybel IV, p. 159; Oncken: *Rheinpolitik* I, p. 72; G. W. V, p. 309; *Origines* VII, p. 140 f.—The news went the rounds of the German courts and the newspapers. Bismarck told Lord Napier that he was soon going to urge Austria to sell Holstein, because Prussia would have, early in 1866, £6 million available from the sale of railways, etc (Napier to Russell, November 16, 1865, No. 265 Most Confidential. F. O. 64, Prussia 578).

Bleichröder's Vienna correspondent, Goldschmidt, found only "deaf ears, [and] the flag of honor flying high."⁸³ Count Mensdorff replied to an inquiry of the British ambassador, that "though Austria had ceded her share of Lauenburg for money, she had no intention of acting in this way with regard to Schleswig-Holstein."⁸⁴ The refusal was flat and final.

On the other hand, certain Austrians still hoped for compensations in land, or a guarantee for Venetia. Esterhazy, the Emperor, and Blome, in closing the convention of Gastein, had had such solutions in mind.⁸⁵ And it was surely due to their inspiration, that the most effective means was chosen to convey such ideas to King William: through confidential talks between those two old comrades in arms and apostles of the Austro-Prussian alliance, Generals Gablenz and Manteuffel.⁸⁶ An active associate was the clever Leopold von Hofmann, Halbhuter's successor, who had talked much with Blome concerning Gastein and its consequences.⁸⁷ Though protesting that he had no instructions, Hofmann described to Manteuffel the Emperor's inmost desires, and argued so convincingly for their justice, and their satisfaction in the name of Austro-Prussian solidarity,⁸⁸ that the impressionable gen-

⁸³ Memorandum of Keudell, Berlin November 20, 1865 (HAA): "Der Wiener Geschäftsfreund schreibt: 'in der Holsteinschen Kauf-Angelegenheit ist jetzt *durchaus nichts* zu machen, taube Ohren, die Fahne der Ehre hoch, der A. h. Wille ist ganz dagegen — es ist besser jetzt ganz ruhig bleiben, denn jede Bemühung wäre umsonst, jetzt wo die Anleihe doch zum Theil ging — aber auch ohne diesen Erfolg wäre jetzt schwerlich etwas auszurichten.'"

⁸⁴ Bloomfield to Clarendon, December 21, 1865, No. 45 Confidential (F. O. 7 Austria 687). Similarly in Mensdorff to Mülinen, October 25.

⁸⁵ Hassel: *Albert von Sachsen II*, p. 215; Blome's remark to Prince Reuss (Reuss to Bismarck, February 21, 1866, No. 8 *Vertraulich*, HAA).

⁸⁶ Gablenz had conversations with Esterhazy before leaving for his post.

⁸⁷ Manteuffel to Bismarck, October 8, 1865 (copy in HAA) For the career of Leopold von Hofmann to the war of 1866, the meager sources are chiefly Frzibram: *Erinnerungen eines alten Oesterreichers I* (here and there), and Wurzbach: *Biographisches Lexicon des Kaiserthums Oesterreich XI*, p. 174 f., XXVI, p. 389 ff. Junck's anonymous article: "Holstein unter der oesterreichischen Statthalterschaft," in *Deutsche Vierteljahrschrift CXIX*, 1867, pp. 203-242, gives interesting side-lights on Hofmann's activity as civil commissioner in Holstein.

⁸⁸ Manteuffel to Bismarck, October 11, 1865 *Vertraulich* (HAA; printed below, in Appendix A, No. 11; brief summary in Sybel IV, p. 173).

eral advised his monarch to open negotiations with Vienna. "Haven't we some counties that we could give to Bavaria and then give Passau to Austria?" he inquired.⁸⁰ After many similar conversations had taken place over the coffee cups in Kiel and Schleswig, Manteuffel was forced to confess, however, that Bismarck was less generous with land compensation-offers than he himself would be.⁸⁰ Gablenz seems not to have informed Mensdorff of these *pourparlers*, perhaps mistrusting Biegeleben's influence; and a hint for permission to press Manteuffel and secure propositions from Berlin went unanswered in Vienna.⁸¹ The *Ballplatz*, in contrast to the *Hofburg*, seemed quite indifferent to the question.

The official despatches between Vienna and Berlin had been amply occupied with the consequences of the Gastein convention, both in the Duchies and in Frankfurt. We shall not here examine the quarrel with the city of Frankfurt, nor the third (and last) Bavarian-Saxon-Hessian resolution on behalf of Augustenburg.⁸² The Frankfurt affair was a trap of Bismarck's into which Franz Joseph and Esterhazy fell headlong, during the vacation of Mensdorff and Biegeleben from Vienna.⁸³ As soon as the minister and his *Referent* returned, they adroitly rescued Austria from a situation which would have compromised her further with the *Mittelstaaten*, and they gave Bismarck a partial rebuff.⁸⁴ Yet the rebuff was so skilful, and Austria's simultaneous stand against the Bavarian motion so loyal to the Prussian alliance, that Bismarck's later

⁸⁰ Manteuffel to Bismarck, October 21, 1865, *Vertraulich* (copy in HAA). Moltke had told Manteuffel that Austria desired Passau for military reasons.

⁸⁰ Gablenz to Mensdorff, December 31, 1865, No. 42.

⁸¹ Gablenz to Mensdorff, letter of October 31, 1865; Mensdorff's reply, November 9.

⁸² For brief accounts see Stern IX, pp. 434-435; Sybel IV, pp. 176-178. The best detailed study of the Frankfurt affair is in R. Schwemer: *Geschichte der freien Stadt Frankfurt am Main 1814-1866* III, Heft 2, pp. 227-249, using Prussian but not Austrian documents.

⁸³ For the Austrian attitude, and the disputed question of the initiative in the affair, see the protocol of the council of September 19 (Appendix A, No. 10).

⁸⁴ Cf. Benedetti's report (*Origines* VII, p. 243).

cry of "breach of the Salzburg agreement" sounded unconvincing to all but William. As usual, his case was built upon a conception of federal law and conservative principles at variance with that of Austria, and it speaks ill for the political acumen of Franz Joseph and his chief adviser that they did not see more clearly whither they were being led.

GABLENZ' REGIME IN HOLSTEIN

As in the spring of 1865, so now, the focal point of Austro-Prussian interest was again the region of the lower Elbe, where the Austrian *Statthalter* and the Prussian *Gouverneur*, each in his own peculiar manner, were ruling their troubled provinces. The costly despotism of Manteuffel in Schleswig, and the benevolent regime of Gablenz in Holstein, have often been compared and contrasted, but the relations between these generals-turned-administrator have until recently been judged solely upon the basis of Sybel's interpretation, derived from the reports of Manteuffel to his government.⁹⁵ The reports of Gablenz, on the other hand, show us the other side of the picture, and permit us to appreciate more fully the delicate situation which finally brought the rupture of the Austro-Prussian alliance.⁹⁶

The instructions given to the new *Statthalter* reveal the desire of the Austrian government to preserve its "pawn"—Holstein—from "deterioration," so that it could later be

⁹⁵ Sybel IV, pp. 167-172; Jansen-Samwer pp. 528-531; Stern IX, pp. 436-438.

⁹⁶ The following account was first written without knowledge of two other accounts based also on the Gablenz papers: Johanna Wallner's sketch in the *Wiener Zeitung* (May 1923) was inaccessible; and Reinhold Lorenz' monographic article: "Gablenz in Holstein," in the *Zeitschrift der Gesellschaft für Schleswig-Holsteinische Geschichte* LIX, 1930, pp. 1-216, appeared after the present account had been submitted as part of a doctoral thesis. Lorenz' article is a detailed description of the Gablenz regime in all its aspects, whereas the present account aims merely to interpret that regime as a phase of Austro-Prussian diplomacy. In addition to the earlier printed material in Gablenz cited by Lorenz (*loc. cit.* p. 41 note 1), see the unnoticed anonymous article (surely by Gablenz' aide, Major Junck): "Holstein unter der oesterreichischen Statthalterschaft," in *Deutsche Vierteljahrschrift* CXIX, 1867, pp. 203-242.

handed over either to Prussia or to the Diet, according to circumstances at the proper time.⁹⁷ But Franz Joseph adjured Gablenz not to lose himself in petty police measures⁹⁸ (as Halbhuter had done). Since the Prussians later accused the general of having "double instructions," it may now be definitely stated that such was not the case.⁹⁹ His orders read as follows:

"The sole basis for your entire conduct is provided by the [Gastein] convention. You will be expected to carry it out with exactitude in all points. . . . Nothing must happen to prejudice or to make more difficult, the future decision of the Imperial Court as to the solution of the Duchies problem. On the one hand, you may not give any sort of positive or binding assurance to the Prince of Augustenburg or his party. On the other hand, you must spare the feelings of the country, so as to avoid turning public opinion in Holstein away from Austria and the German Federation, and causing it to surrender to the Prussian annexation current, independently of our wish and in conflict with our interests. It is equally important to avoid the one rock as much as the other, so that the Land may be kept in a condition free from prejudice, to the time when the combinations of general *Politik* will bring about the final decision over its fate."

Gablenz was further exhorted "to preserve good comradeship with the Prussian troops, and good neighborly relations with the Prussian administration . . . and in the complex . . . matters common to both Duchies, to exhibit a spirit of the greatest fairness and conciliation. Should you, on the other hand, perceive a tendency of the Prussian authorities to overstep the accurately defined rights allotted to them by the Convention, then you are first to make amicable representations, and if necessary to use firmness in order to uphold the stipulations of the Convention and protect the interests and prestige of the Imperial Government."

In dealing with the press and the political clubs, Gablenz was instructed *not* to reinstate the former Danish regulations,¹⁰⁰ but "vigorously to oppose any disturbance of public order by punishable excesses . . . ; and to hold the *Landesregierung* to continuous watchfulness and strict fulfillment of the laws on this *terrain*." He was not to permit the Holstein

⁹⁷ Mensdorff to Gablenz, September 6, 1865 (HHS; printed in Lorenz, *loc. cit.* pp. 207-209).

⁹⁸ Gablenz to Mensdorff, letter of October 31.

⁹⁹ There was no longer any question of instructions from a press-bureau at variance with those from Mensdorff. In the most private correspondence of Gablenz there is no sign of double instructions. The pursuit of a middle course naturally implied the necessity of "tacking" between two extremes, which the Prussians misunderstood.

¹⁰⁰ A Prussian request in this sense was rejected by Blome at Gastein (Blome to Mensdorff, Gastein, August 14, No. 1).

press to use an insulting tone even in a polemic against the Prussian papers.

Finally, Gablenz was ordered to keep down all agitation for the calling of the Estates, and to treat the Prince of Augustenburg, quite unofficially, with the personal courtesy due to one of his princely rank.¹⁰¹

This last provision fulfilled the *only* promise that Franz Joseph had made to King William at Salzburg concerning the management of Holstein: that the *Erbprinz* would be treated as a private citizen. This fact should be carefully noted.

Only the express command of his Emperor forced General Gablenz to assume a post of whose difficulty he was well aware.¹⁰² Making a virtue of necessity, he asserted his gratitude for instructions which were "drawn from his very soul,"¹⁰³ though he saw his task as "nearly insoluble."¹⁰⁴ Nevertheless, he was greeted in Kiel with flagged streets;¹⁰⁵ and his opening proclamation, following the spirit of his instructions, marked out the line of conduct that he was to follow from first to last in his province:

"Far from exercising powers of decisive policy, and free from any partisan influence, I am moved solely by the thought of working ceaselessly for the development of the welfare of this land, and, supported by the confidence of the populations, to fulfil their justified desires."¹⁰⁶

From the beginning, Gablenz forecast danger from the Prussians. Even King William, to whom he had paid his respects in Berlin, impressed upon him that the Augustenburg combination "could no longer be considered.—Why!" exclaimed the good monarch in dudgeon, "the Prince no longer possesses even a uniform!" When William confessed his

¹⁰¹ Mensdorff to Gablenz, September 6 (drafted by Biegeleben), expressly approved by the Emperor.

¹⁰² Gablenz to Colonel Witzleben, letter of September 27 (HHS: *Nachlass Gablenz*). Franz Joseph, however, promised to reserve the command of the 5th army corps for Gablenz (Gablenz to Baron Esceles, September 30, *Ibid*)

¹⁰³ Gablenz to Mensdorff, letter of September 11

¹⁰⁴ Gablenz to Mensdorff, September 14, No. 1 *Vertraulich*.

¹⁰⁵ But the population on the whole, still incensed by the Gastein convention, were cool at first (C. Junck's anonymous article, *loc. cit.* p. 212).

¹⁰⁶ Hoff: *Die Kämpfe um Schleswig-Holstein* pp. 180-181; *Staatsarchiv IX*, pp. 296-297.

belief that Prussia would obtain the Duchies, Gablenz replied that before his sovereign could think of giving up his share he must secure adequate compensation for it.¹⁰⁷

In Schleswig, Manteuffel and Zedlitz had gone quickly to work toward annexation. They demanded "obedience" of the inhabitants,¹⁰⁸ and forced the officials whom they installed to take the oath of allegiance to the King of Prussia.¹⁰⁹ Their lavish expenditures made Bismarck groan.¹¹⁰ The press was severely controlled, and made an instrument of propaganda. And the governor openly fostered the annexation idea in his speeches and his private conversations wherever he went.¹¹¹

Nevertheless, the personal relations between Manteuffel and Gablenz began with the greatest cordiality. In frequent conversations, the *Statthalter* and his *Commissar* expressed their hope that Prussia would eventually obtain possession of the Duchies;¹¹² but the essential prerequisite was *always*, that Austria must first be granted a territorial or political payment for her title. They preferred Prussia's friendship to Augustenburg's, and therefore hoped that King William would appreciate Austria's position.¹¹³ Meanwhile Gablenz sent urgent appeals to Vienna to hurry up some sort of a settlement.¹¹⁴ But he received no consolation from the *Ballplatz*, only "wait, wait, courage, and steady."¹¹⁵

The apologists of Bismarck have seized upon Gablenz' administration of Holstein to accuse Austria of breaking the convention of Gastein, and thus to justify Prussia's severance

¹⁰⁷ Gablenz to Meysenbug, September 14, No. 1 *Vertraulich*.

¹⁰⁸ Proclamation of September 15 (*Staatsarchiv* IX, p. 296).

¹⁰⁹ Halbhuber to Mensdorff, September 7, No. 311.

¹¹⁰ Sybel IV, pp. 168-169.

¹¹¹ Gablenz to Mensdorff, September 27, No. 10; letter of October 31.

¹¹² See Appendix A, No. 11; also Manteuffel to Bismarck, October 8 (copy in HAA).

¹¹³ Manteuffel to Bismarck, October 8 (copy in HAA).

¹¹⁴ Gablenz to Mensdorff, letter of October 31.

¹¹⁵ Mensdorff to Gablenz, letter of November 9, 1865.

of the Austria alliance.¹¹⁶ They praise Gablenz for an excellent beginning (i.e. friendly concessions to Prussia, and a firm stand against Augustenburg), and then they tax him with a change of policy in November. They trace this to a more determined attitude in the *Ballplatz*.¹¹⁷ They seem to discover suddenly in December that Austria does not intend to invoke the Danish laws against the press and the *Vereins* in the Duchies, that Austria is committing an illegitimate and unfriendly act by encouraging sentiment for Augustenburg in order to offset "legitimate" Prussian annexation propaganda, and that Gablenz (and the *Ballplatz*) were relaxing their support of the Gastein convention.¹¹⁸ Basing their attacks on materials from Manteuffel's reports, and from Bismarck's complaints to Vienna, these critics of Austrian policy seek to load upon the shoulders of Mensdorff and Biegeleben and Franz Joseph, of Gablenz and von Hofmann, the guilt for starting relations upon the down-grade which ended in war.¹¹⁹ The witty and telling rebuttal by Friedjung can now be supported by more positive data from the Austrian side.¹²⁰

In the first place, absolutely no change in policy was even hinted to Gablenz by his superiors.¹²¹ Not until the New Year were any new instructions given to him, and those prescribed no new direction but only stricter measures in pursuing the original policy of holding an equal balance between

¹¹⁶ This is the *Tendenz* of the Sybel school.

¹¹⁷ Sybel IV, pp. 186-187. Thimme (*G. W. V.*, pp. 325, 343-344) takes the word of the sensitive, anything but objective, Manteuffel for a change in Austria's policy. Yet Manteuffel tried to shift to Bismarck's shoulders part of the blame for this change (report of December 16: *G. W. V.*, p. 343).

¹¹⁸ *G. W. V.*, pp. 325, 344; Sybel IV, pp. 186-187.

¹¹⁹ Sybel IV, p. 192.

¹²⁰ Friedjung: *Kampf um die Vorherrschaft* I, p. 153, also pp. 141-142.

¹²¹ The only important despatches from Vienna were dated October 25 (disapproving Augustenburg's trip to Schleswig); November 1 (on the Holstein Estates); and December 16 (forbidding celebration of the Princess' journey). On January 30, 1866, Mensdorff wrote to Gablenz: absolutely no change in instructions.

Prussia and Augustenburg.¹²² Whatever Gablenz may have learned from private sources about the feelings in Vienna, he was told nothing by Mensdorff save that the foreign minister longed for a solution of the spiny problem as badly as he.¹²³ This should clear the *Ballplatz* from engineering a change of policy in November and December, 1865.

In the second place, Gablenz himself, from the beginning to the end of his Statthaltership, followed his original instructions to the best of his ability; to preserve the pawn intact, to steer the neutral middle course avoiding the Scylla of Prussian policy and the Charybdis of the Augustenburg direction.¹²⁴ With moderation instead of repression as his watchword, he allowed reasonable activity to the propaganda of both parties, but kept it within the bounds, not of the harsh Danish laws, but of the press laws of Austria.¹²⁵ He forbade the designation "Friedrich VIII" but permitted "*Hoheit*" and "*Herzog*,"¹²⁶ for Friedrich's father had transferred this title to his son.¹²⁷ He gave "strict orders to all papers to leave the monarchs out of the question," but would not hinder them from "criticizing the Bismarck policy and its aims."¹²⁸ Yet he was "determined not to tolerate a shadow government of any sort."¹²⁹ He persuaded the Prince to refrain from any act which might provoke demonstrations from his followers,¹³⁰ and Frederick kept his word.¹³¹

Gablenz preferred to accomplish his purpose with moral

¹²² Mensdorff to Gablenz, December 29, 1865, and oral instructions to Hofmann (Vogt p. 83 note 3).

¹²³ Mensdorff to Gablenz, letter of November 9.

¹²⁴ Gablenz to Mensdorff, letter of September 11.

¹²⁵ See below, in this chapter.

¹²⁶ Gablenz to Manteuffel, October 27 (copy in HHS).

¹²⁷ Jansen-Samwer p. 539. Bismarck denied the legality of this title for Prince Friedrich.

¹²⁸ Gablenz to Chotek, letter of October 17 (HHS: *Nachlass Gablenz*).

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*

¹³⁰ The orders to do this came from Vienna (Mensdorff to Gablenz, October 25).

¹³¹ Though he interpreted it to apply only to his own person, not to his wife.

suasion,¹³² but in flagrant cases he took severe measures.¹³³ In December, he offered to prosecute the Augustenburg newspaper if Manteuffel wished.¹³⁴ In January, he was ordered to check the political clubs.¹³⁵ No procedure against the annexationists, on the other hand, is recorded, though Gablenz in personal relations expressed his displeasure with the extremists of both factions; and he finally attempted to draw the moderate Augustenburgers away from Friedrich, who had fallen into the hands of his more radical followers.¹³⁶ In this, as in all his acts, the purpose was to fulfil his sovereign's instructions, to maintain a free hand in all directions.

In the third place, this policy of neutrality and balance had been explained to the Prussians with unmistakeable frankness early in the game.

"The Emperor," said Hofmann to Manteuffel, "considers Holstein as a security for his rights in the Duchies, and the *Statthalter's* duty is to maintain it intact for the Emperor. [For instance], were annexationist officials installed, the value of the security would be diminished, hence the *Statthalter* had to preserve the *status quo* in popular opinion in Holstein through the counterpoise of Augustenburg officials . . ."¹³⁷

¹³² On October 4, Gablenz called together the leading members of the *Landesregierung* and urged them to aid him in preventing abuses of the press-laws, and make stricter measures unnecessary. Gablenz hoped this would prove sufficient, for repression would only serve Prussian propaganda (Gablenz to Meysenbug, October 5, No. 13A). Gablenz also persuaded the professors and students of Kiel University to refrain from political toasts and excesses at their 200th anniversary celebration,—no small feat of diplomacy (Gablenz to Mensdorff, October 31).

¹³³ He secured the dismissal of the notorious Frese and May from the staff of the Augustenburg paper, and their return to Prussia. After seizing May and threatening his trial, Bismarck had quietly released him, well knowing that that agitator would hurry back to Kiel and cause trouble for Gablenz. This stroke Gablenz thus parried for the time being (Gablenz to Mensdorff October 31).

¹³⁴ Gablenz to Mensdorff, December 2, No. 30. The paper accused two Prussian officers of complicity in the theft of Samwer's papers, correctly, as it turned out.

¹³⁵ Meysenbug to Gablenz, January 13, 1866

¹³⁶ Gablenz to Mensdorff, January 3, No. 1B *Geheim*.

¹³⁷ Manteuffel to Bismarck, October 11, 1865, *Vertraulich* (HAA; Appendix A, No. 11).

Several days before, Gablenz himself had defended his moderate policy against Manteuffel's complaints. When his Prussian friend mentioned orders from Berlin, Gablenz declared that he was not the mandatory of Prussia, and that he could not prevent in Holstein what was being discussed in the whole of Europe. He could not forbid the papers to criticize the convention of Gastein, when it was so warmly treated in the press of Prussia and Austria themselves.¹³⁸

Austria's position would have been stronger, had the Emperor at Salzburg told the King that he intended to interpret literally article one of the convention. But Franz Joseph saw no need for this, so clearly was it stated in black and white that the exercise of the sovereign rights in Holstein devolved, not on Prussia, but on Austria.¹³⁹ There was no restriction.¹⁴⁰ Early in November, when the *Ballplatz* first had occasion to call attention to this exclusive right of administration and freedom from interference in Holstein, it was not directly opposed in Berlin.¹⁴¹ Not only the wording, but the purpose of the instrument—to lessen disagreement between the two powers in governing the Duchies¹⁴²—supported the Austrian interpretation. From the beginning, Austria herself acted upon this policy: not once did Mensdorff protest against, nor Gablenz interfere with, the Manteuffel-Bismarck design of converting Schleswig into a Prussian province.¹⁴³ In equity, Gablenz might well have given free reign to the Prince in Holstein, and stamped out Prussian propaganda. But he made no secret of his "hands-off" policy from the beginning.

¹³⁸ Gablenz to Meysenbug, October 5, 1865, No. 13A. Manteuffel's version of this conversation, substantially the same, in his report to Bismarck, October 8 (HAA).

¹³⁹ *Staatsarchiv* IX, p. 288.

¹⁴⁰ Save those specifically provided in subsequent articles.

¹⁴¹ Mensdorff to Chotek, October 30; Chotek to Mensdorff, November 20 No. 71A. Bismarck did not relish the Austrian interpretation (cf. *G. W. V.*, p. 377), but withheld his opposition for the moment in the hope that Austria would call the Estates on her sole authority, and thus provide him with a *casus belli* (*Origines* VII, pp. 58, 255; *G. W. V.*, p. 353).

¹⁴² Bismarck had constantly spoken of this as the object of the convention.

¹⁴³ Cf. memorandum of Gablenz, Kiel, December 27, 1865.

The Prussians were amply forewarned and had no reason to be surprised at the consequences.

In the fourth place, to maintain this neutrality, this *status quo* in public opinion in his province, Gablenz was gradually forced to show less conciliation both toward the Prussian importunities, and toward the radical leaders of the Augustenburg movement. The cause of this tightening of the reins was the Prussian governor's increasingly desperate attempts to stamp out the Augustenburg movement in Schleswig, and to spread there the gospel of Prussian annexation.

"Since he has dissolved the clubs, punished the papers, and even forbidden telegrams when not friendly to Prussia, he finds himself on a steep incline," wrote the *Statthalter*, "That he would like to drag me on to this steep incline goes without saying"¹⁴⁴

The Prussian offensive showed in its worst light in November and December, when spies sanctioned by Prussian officers were caught redhanded in Holstein, in the theft of private papers from Samwer, chief advisor of Augustenburg.¹⁴⁵

As the Schleswigers cast longing eyes toward the happier land of Holstein, and the pent-up feelings burst forth with double volume in Gablenz' province, the Prussian governor redoubled his demands upon his Austrian colleague. In October, Gablenz had written with a sigh, "Hardly a day goes by that [Manteuffel] doesn't turn to me with some petty trouble, and though I've so far parried them with the best form, yet I foresee clearly that my position here is not tenable for long."¹⁴⁶ To meet the governor without encountering complaints was impossible.¹⁴⁷ By December, the importunities had grown so frequent that Gablenz' nerves were shattered.

¹⁴⁴ Gablenz to Chotek, letter of October 17; to Mensdorff, letter of October 31.

¹⁴⁵ Gablenz to Mensdorff, December 2, No. 30. Cf. Jansen-Samwer pp. 544-545.

¹⁴⁶ Gablenz to Mensdorff, letter of October 31. Cf. Gablenz to Meysenbug, October 5, No. 13A.

¹⁴⁷ Gablenz to Mensdorff, October 20, No. 17B.

"In all my life," he wrote, "I've never served under such frightfully irritating conditions. Everyone wants to embroil me with the opposite party, the intrigues of the Prussians and the Augustenburgers are ceaseless, and not a day goes by in which I have one single peaceful hour."¹⁴⁸ "It is flatly impossible to exist the shortest time without being pestered by Manteuffel."¹⁴⁹ "I would rather attack a battery than stand here morally in the breach,—the first is a *mauvais quart d'heure*—the second an endless crossfire."¹⁵⁰

At last Gablenz thought that he had gone well-nigh the limit in concessions to the Prussian governor, and that to submit to further interference would only compromise his position and open the way to Prussian domination of Holstein. When Manteuffel visited him on December 14, the *Statthalter* and his *Commissar* spoke their minds as frankly as they had in October. As then, so now, they warned that if the Prussian offensive continued, they would have to give equal freedom to the Augustenburg movement.¹⁵¹ In short, Gablenz asked Manteuffel to "leave me in peace, as I leave him."¹⁵² Hofmann was sent to Vienna for instructions to deal with the new situation.

"The difference between this conversation and the earlier ones," wrote Manteuffel to Bismarck, "is this, that several months ago the two men saw it as a fixed plan that Prussia should receive the Duchies. . . . This time they knew nothing about it, and pictured themselves as in a state of defense against Prussia's policy, so that it was a question of preserving Austria's copossessory rights and, if necessary, fighting for them."¹⁵³

Was it the fault of the *Ballplatz* that the pre-Gastein troubles were recurring, when the chief Prussian propagandist, Constantin Rössler, could write at this time, "It is *we* who cannot

¹⁴⁸ Gablenz to Mensdorff, letter of December 15; similarly, letter of January 11, 1866.

¹⁴⁹ Gablenz to Mensdorff, December 27, No. 40 *Vertraulich*. "Bismarck und Manteuffel wollen, dass ich ein ärgeres Polizei-Regiment führen soll, als jetzt in Schleswig ist." (Gablenz to Baronin Anton Gablenz, December 2, 1865, HHS: *Nachlass Gablenz*).

¹⁵⁰ Gablenz to Mensdorff, letter of January 11, 1866.

¹⁵¹ Sybel IV, p. 188.

¹⁵² Gablenz to Mensdorff, December 19, 1865, No. 37A.

¹⁵³ Manteuffel to Bismarck, December 16, *Vertraulich* (HAA).

wait, it is we who must keep moving. For we are on the offensive."¹⁵⁴

Both Bismarck and Manteuffel were too close to the facts and too keen observers not to know what they were about. For different reasons, they now in December attacked the self-same Austrian policy that they had complacently tolerated in September and October.

Bismarck had wanted a breathing-spell after Gastein, and a quiet vacation in Biarritz during October. On his return to Berlin in November, he was ready to begin his campaign for the Duchies, in earnest. He gave *carte-blanche* to the Prussian press to hit back at Austria,¹⁵⁵ and to the astonished Chotek, he exclaimed: "There cannot exist between Austria and Prussia a half-relationship. Either sincere alliance or war to the knife."¹⁵⁶ His staff-orders ran:

"... Continue to complain in Vienna over the Austrian administration in Holstein, and keep open such complaints as might be capable of sharper development under certain circumstances. Exercise a slow gradual pressure against Austria without provocative or final steps."¹⁵⁷

Bismarck told Benedetti, with a smile, that he was sending complaints to Vienna "twice a week,"—they served to alienate King William step by step from his ally.¹⁵⁸

Gablenz' other accuser, his friend Manteuffel, had gone to Schleswig in the first place with the definite purpose to pre-

¹⁵⁴ Letter to Max Duncker, December 13, 1865 (*Max Duncker's Politischer Briefwechsel* pp. 397-398).

¹⁵⁵ Bandmann: *Die deutsche Presse* p. 82. For the first time since Gastein, the *Kreuzzeitung* on November 23 threatened war, in phrases similar to Bismarck's (Bandmann pp. 54, 86). The *Kölnische Zeitung* published word for word, a conversation between Bismarck and Chotek, which the former admitted he had given to that journal (Chotek to Mensdorff, November 20, No. 71B *Vertraulich*).

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.* Bismarck justified his orders to the press, as reprisals against the virulence of the Austrian press.

¹⁵⁷ Memorandum in the hand of undersecretary von Thile, c. November 26 (HAA). Cf. G. W. V, p. 329.

¹⁵⁸ *Origines* VII, p. 223.

pare the Duchies for annexation.¹⁵⁰ He had made what amounted to a wager with Bismarck, that in three months he would bring Austria to accept the Prussian doctrine. If he failed, then he agreed to Bismarck's own plan of "unpleasant alliances."¹⁵⁰ In reality, Manteuffel failed miserably, not only in Holstein, but in his own Schleswig, where he had the powers of a "Turkish pasha."¹⁵¹ At the end of December, the doughty general was so dejected that he contemplated cutting the Gordian knot by a declaration of martial law.¹⁵² Possibly too he envied Gablenz' popularity and success in Holstein.¹⁵³ At any rate, he saw himself compromised in Berlin, and his influence upon the King in decline while Bismarck's grew stronger.¹⁵⁴

¹⁵⁰ Manteuffel to Bismarck, letter of September 10 (Kohl: *Bismarck-Jahrbuch* III, p. 202), quoted by Thimme, *G. W. V.*, p. 345; also Gablenz to Mensdorff, December 31, No. 42.

¹⁵¹ Manteuffel to Bismarck, January 18, 1866, *Vertraulich* (HAA); Sybel IV, p. 190; Gablenz to Mensdorff, December 31, No. 42 — In early October, Manteuffel had told Gablenz that he and Bismarck had the same purpose, annexation of the Duchies, but differed as to means. Bismarck wanted to get them with the aid of France against Austria, a policy which Manteuffel considered "leidenschaftlich, abenteuerlich, und principienlos" Though Bismarck had promised him a "vorgängige Auseinandersetzung mit Oesterreich," Manteuffel thought that the premier was tricking him by the trip to Biarritz (Gablenz to Meysenbug, October 5, No. 13B).

¹⁵² "The feeling in Schleswig is much worse than it was," wrote Rössler, "If the situation continues to get worse, I'm not sure whether six months from now a certain man will still be minister." (*Max Duncker's Politischer Briefwechsel* pp. 397-398). Manteuffel told Gablenz that he had failed only because of Bismarck's misguided instructions! He (Manteuffel) had several times asked for release, but William had persuaded him to carry on (Gablenz to Mensdorff, letter of January 31, 1866).

¹⁵³ *G. W. V.*, p. 345.

¹⁵⁴ He spoke scornfully of Gablenz' chase for popularity.

¹⁵⁴ Very significant is his confession to Gablenz on December 30: ". . . dass er [Manteuffel] nach der Vereinbarung von Gastein, und nach Allem, was dabei besprochen wurde, die Annexion der Herzogtümer an Preussen als etwas gemeinsam Beschlossenes betrachtet habe, und mit der Überzeugung hierhergekommen sei, sie in längstens 10 bis 12 Wochen zur Durchführung gelangen zu sehen. Durch die Wendung, welche die Angelegenheiten seither genommen haben, sehe er sich nun allerdings zu einem Stillstande in seinem Vorgehen genötigt, und finde sich auch einiger Massen kompromittirt." (Gablenz to Mensdorff, December 31, 1865, No. 42) Cf. also remarks of Manteuffel on October 4 (Gablenz to Meysenbug, October 5, No. 13B).

Yet it was this super-sensitive, mercurial Manteuffel, this "Bayard with a touch of Don Quixote",¹⁶⁵ and the statesman who by this time was as sure that he could gain his great ends only by war as he was master of the means to turn events in that direction, who have accused Gablenz and Mensdorff of shifting to an anti-Prussian, pro-Augustenburg policy and thus justifying Bismarck's swing to Italy, and the rupture of the Austrian alliance. The trouble was, of course, that the Berlin government considered Austria's friendly neutrality as hostility. But in all fairness, why was it more hostile for the one state to preserve its pawn for a compensation, than for the other to try to win both Duchies out of its ally's hand without offering anything but vague promises in return? The truth is, that when Manteuffel and his minister-president saw that the Austrians did not intend to withdraw from the lower Elbe and sell or abandon the Duchies to Prussia, they were both ready for war.¹⁶⁶

Manteuffel now urged Bismarck to bring Austria to terms: she must break utterly with the Augustenburg party. As a test he suggested the expulsion of the Prince from the Duchies,¹⁶⁷ — the good old pre-Gastein device. But events soon made such a test unnecessary. Through a lamentable error of judgment, Gablenz permitted the famous mass-meeting at Altona on January 23.¹⁶⁸ While no resolutions

¹⁶⁵ Ludwig Dehio: "Edwin von Manteuffel's Politische Ideen," in *Historische Zeitschrift* CXXXI, 1925, p. 42 note (quoting Dove).

¹⁶⁶ Gablenz to Mensdorff, December 31, 1865, No. 42: "Freiherr von Manteuffel charakterisirt die Verschiedenheit seines Standpunktes von jenem des Gr. Bismarck dadurch, dass er für die Annexion eine Entschädigung Oesterreichs an Land und Geld wolle, während der Minister-Präsident hierzu weniger geneigt sei. Aber auch seine [Manteuffels] Ideen über die Oesterreich zu gewährenden Kompensationen, ermangelten jeder bestimmteren Präzisierung, und kamen über ganz allgemeine Floskeln nicht hinaus."

¹⁶⁷ Manteuffel to Bismarck, January 14 and 18, 1866 (HAA). But Manteuffel advised that, "if one doesn't yet desire the rupture," he could settle outstanding differences directly with Gablenz (January 14).

¹⁶⁸ Sybel IV, p. 195. Mensdorff learned later that agitators from Berlin had taken a prominent part, and the idea of the meeting had been hatched in the Prussian capital, by the Committee of 16.

were adopted, and Prince Frederick took no part, certain over-zealous followers raised the shout for Friedrich VIII. The news of this demonstration was far more disagreeable to the *Hofburg* than to Bismarck. Mensdorff gravely disapproved of Gablenz' action, but considered it a matter to be settled by Austria alone.¹⁶⁰ If Prussia complained, he intended to maintain Austria's exclusive right to administer Holstein free from Prussian control.¹⁷⁰ But he let the Berlin government know in confidence, that he deeply regretted Gablenz' mistake,¹⁷¹ that Gablenz himself evidently felt the same,¹⁷² and that Franz Joseph was quite upset.¹⁷³ Moreover he gave his word that no such accident should occur again.¹⁷⁴ These assurances ought to have satisfied any ally whose policy was peace.

But Bismarck seized the opportunity for a quarrel. Obviously the provocation could not be overlooked, and it gave him an excellent opening against Austria. He had already been poisoning the relations in the manner of the previous spring. The situation of March 1865 had recurred. At the earnest request of Gablenz, to counteract the new aggressiveness of the Prussian and the Augustenburg parties, Mensdorff had given him (the *Statthalter*) permission to tighten the reins: no interference to be tolerated from either quarter, but no change in the policy of the middle course, and the friendliest relations to be maintained with Manteuffel.¹⁷⁵ Bismarck at once exploited this non-interference tenet as unfriendliness to an ally. An interview with Hofrat von Hofmann, who had passed through Berlin at New Years', provided the minister

¹⁶⁰ Mensdorff to Gablenz, January 29 and 30, 1866; Mensdorff to Karolyi, January 27. Cf. Sybel IV, p. 194.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁷¹ Sybel IV, p. 197; Werther to Bismarck, January 30, tg. No. 26 (AGEV).

¹⁷² Werther to Bismarck, February 8, No. 43 (HAA).

¹⁷³ Werther to Thile, letter of February 1 (PGS: *Nachlass Manteuffel*).

¹⁷⁴ Mensdorff to Karolyi, February 7, No. 2 *Vertraulich*.

¹⁷⁵ Mensdorff to Gablenz, December 29, 1865. Cf. Vogt p. 83 note 3.

with further ammunition.¹⁷⁶ On the strength of the Altona affair, he now secured William's signature to a sharp note which resembled those of Bismarck's heyday before Gastein, and contained the same arguments. On January 26, it went off to Vienna.¹⁷⁷

DISILLUSIONMENT IN VIENNA

In the face of this return to the pre-Gastein situation, what attitude did Austria assume?

The Emperor had determined, at the moment he approved the Gastein convention, to yield no farther to Prussia.¹⁷⁸ Subsequent events only strengthened his resolve not to repeat the Gastein *reculade*. Four circumstances were responsible for this attitude: public opinion; Bismarck's policy; the improvement of Austria's internal conditions and international position; and military and court influences in Vienna.

Probably the earliest cause for the new firmness was the universal outcry against the convention. Franz Joseph, always sensitive to newspaper criticism, was especially hurt by the bitter charges that Austria had abdicated her position in Germany, had sealed a dishonorable compact by selling Lauenburg, and had incurred a "second Olmütz" instead of inflicting one.¹⁷⁹ Even the *Allgemeine Zeitung*, Austria's great defender in South Germany, now broke away and took a critical tone toward the policy of Vienna.¹⁸⁰ He had to hear it from

¹⁷⁶ Bismarck's memorandum on this interview of December 31 is a glaring example of argument *in usum regis*. Note the number of subjective deductions (*G. W. V.*, p. 346-349). That the minister-president reported only what he wished the King to know, is evident from the Austrian (fuller) account of the same interview (Chotek to Mensdorff, January 2, 1866, Nos. 2A and B).

¹⁷⁷ *G. W. V.*, pp. 365-368; *Staatsarchiv X*, pp. 331-334.

¹⁷⁸ Cf. his remark to the Grand Duke of Hesse-Darmstadt (*Dalwigk's Tagebücher* p. 183).

¹⁷⁹ Franz Joseph's resentment at such criticism is apparent from his ready agreement with Bismarck's measures against the Committee of 36 (the Frankfurt affair), and also from his repeated attempts during the autumn of 1865 to strengthen the influence of the cabinet over the Austrian press (protocols of councils of November 2, 10, 28).

¹⁸⁰ Rudler: *Bismarck und die öffentliche Meinung in Bayern, 1862-1866*, p. 115.

all sides, that Austria could no longer claim to be a first-class power.

And what thanks did he receive from Prussia for this humiliation? Only scornful remarks to third persons, and intrigues with Austria's worst enemies. Through Beust and Dalwigk, sayings such as this from Bismarck were forwarded to the *Ballplatz*: (referring to Lauenburg) "the honest man buys, but it is the scamp who sells cheap."¹⁸¹ Nor did it savor of loyal friendship when Bismarck, little more than a month after Salzburg, left for Paris and Biarritz, and sought interviews with the Emperor Napoleon.¹⁸² As soon as he returned, the expected happened.¹⁸³ In the very first interview with the Austrian chargé, Bismarck assumed a tone hardly customary between two equal allies.¹⁸⁴ He also complained of the appointment of the "extremely anti-Prussian" Herr von Braun as chief of the Kaiser's private chancellery;¹⁸⁵ he repeatedly insinuated that the Emperor had turned his back upon his Salzburg-Ischl "promises";¹⁸⁶ he encouraged the *Zollverein*

¹⁸¹ Pfusterschmid to Mensdorff, Dresden, September 14, 1865, No. 79 (from Beust). Cf. Bismarck's words to Pfordten (Friesen II, p. 130).—It was a widespread opinion that Austria should have received twice as much money for Lauenburg as she did (Beust's opinion: Werner to Mensdorff, Gasteln, August 26, Bloomfield's opinion: letter to Russell, August 24, F. O. 356 Bloomfield Papers 39). Similarly, Bismarck's *exposé* (to Beust) of Prussian policy in the Schleswig-Holstein affair (Vogt p. 83), or this remark to Count Hohenthal: "I shall soon take action against Austria *de communi dividendo*. We shall annex Schleswig without further ado, and Austria may hand over to the Augustenburger, debt-ridden Holstein." (Werner to Mensdorff, Dresden, December 13, 1865, No. 100).

¹⁸² Though the Biarritz trip had been planned at least as early as June.

¹⁸³ Chotek had prophesied a renewed offensive of complaints.

¹⁸⁴ Chotek to Mensdorff, November 11, No. 70C *Geheim*

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.* Franz Joseph was said to have exclaimed, when he read this report, "Does the Prussian cabinet demand that I ask their permission in choosing my own officials?" (Manteuffel to Bismarck, December 16 *Vertraulich*, HAA, on information from Gablenz or Hofmann, who had picked it up in the *Ballplatz*). Baron Gagern, Hessian envoy, heard this from Biegeleben (Vogt p. 83 note 2).—On the other hand, Mensdorff later told Werther that the Emperor had not made such a remark to him (Mensdorff) (Werther to Bismarck, February 8, 1866, No. 42, HAA).

¹⁸⁶ Bloomfield to Clarendon, letter of February 15, 1866 (F. O. 356 Bloomfield Papers 39).

states to recognize Italy in apparent contradiction to his own word to Franz Joseph;¹⁸⁷—these acts, coupled with the move of Bavaria and Saxony toward Victor Emanuel, increased the resentment of the Emperor. Henceforth, the monarch and his counsellors were ready to see the cloven hoof of the wily minister-president in everything; they believed the rumor that he had secretly tried to undermine the Austrian loan while he was in Paris;¹⁸⁸ and they were convinced that Bismarck was conspiring with Hungarian revolutionaries to spoil the chances of a settlement.¹⁸⁹

Meanwhile, however, the internal reconstruction of the monarchy, the French loan, the assurances from Napoleon, the beginning of serious parleys with Hungary,—all these favorable factors went far to dissipate the inferiority complex which had possessed the *Hofburg* at the crisis of Gastein.

¹⁸⁷ Bismarck maintained that his promise to the Emperor at Salzburg had carried a large reservation, viz. that "if the other *Zollverein* states, uninfluenced by Berlin, recognized Italy and thus removed the obstacle to the commercial treaty . . . the completion of the treaty might be aided by Prussia" (Chotek to Mensdorff, November 20, No. 71B *Vertraulich*).—The following facts show whether Bismarck kept the letter of his promise or not: On November 19 or 20, Herr von Thile, on instructions from Bismarck, "formally invited Hanover and Electoral Hesse, in the name of the royal Prussian cabinet, to recognize the Kingdom of Italy." (*Ibid.*).—In Paris, Bismarck had besought the Italian government, through its envoy, Nigra, to push the commercial treaty and to demand recognition (La Marmora p. 59).—Bismarck censured his envoy in Cassel for an "ostensible" breach of this Salzburg promise (*G. W. V.*, p. 337), and yet a week later, he publicly joined Bavaria in summoning all the German states to ratify the treaty with the recognition clause.

¹⁸⁸ Sybel (IV, p. 183 note 1) found no sign of this in the Prussian archives, —but why would he? Bismarck spoke with the French Rothschild in Paris in November, and in the previous June he had contemplated opposing an Austrian loan (*Stern* IX, p. 587; Bismarck to Roon, letter of July 3, 1865, in *Bismarck-Jahrbuch* V, p. 188).

¹⁸⁹ Gramont (*Origines* VII, p. 270); Bloomfield to Clarendon, letter of February 15 (F. O. 356 Bloomfield Papers 39). This, too, may have had some basis in fact. In Paris, in 1862, Bismarck had opened relations with Magyar *émigrés*, and had long considered a Hungarian revolution to be one of his cards in a war with Austria (Seherr-Thoss: "Erinnerungen aus meinem Leben," in *Deutsche Rundschau* XXVIII, 1881, p. 63 ff.; *G. W.* VII, pp. 65, 67; Wertheimer: *Bismarck im politischen Kampf* pp. 235-237).

More encouraging comments came in from the German courts,¹⁹⁰ added to such advice as this (from Edelsheim, now minister-president in Baden): "If you wait until *all* the dangers that surround you have disappeared, before adopting an energetic policy against Prussia, a long time may still pass by. What you lack is determination. Under Prince Schwarzenberg you obtained great results '*parce qu'il savait oser*'." ¹⁹¹

Such admonitions did not fall upon barren ground. They were reinforced by others from Austrians of prominence, like Prince Metternich and Ludwig von Gablenz, who pressed for a decision, one way or the other, toward Prussia or toward the Diet.¹⁹² Biegeleben's inner conviction that war was inevitable, and Belcredi's suspicious hostility, had lost nothing in vigor nor potency.¹⁹³ Since Gastein, many persons of influence, like the first adjutant-general, Crenneville, had come to the conclusion that nothing but the sword could end the Prussian danger.¹⁹⁴ The treatment meted out by Bismarck to his ally in November, December, and January swelled the ranks of the devotees of the Schwarzenberg-Schmerling cult in *Hofburg* and *Ballhausplatz*, while the adherents of the Metternich-Rechberg policy lost ground. Count Mensdorff, at heart a Metternichian, still held that his stand at Gastein had been the correct one.¹⁹⁵ He longed to be freed from the

¹⁹⁰ See Beust's remarks: *Origines* VII, pp. 224 f., 265; Dalwigk's remarks: *Origines* VII, p. 236; Pfordten's remarks: Sybel IV, p. 202 (from Reuss to Bismarck, February 21, 1866, No. 8 *Vertraulich*, HAA).

¹⁹¹ Zulauf to Mensdorff, Karlsruhe, December 31, 1865, No. 48. Similarly, Platen's words (Karolyi to Mensdorff, January 26, 1866, No. 7A *Vertraulich*).

¹⁹² Metternich to Mensdorff, December 2, 1865, No. 49B; to Gablenz, letter of March 7 (HHS: *Nachlass Gablenz*); Gablenz to Mensdorff, October 18, No. 16A; letter of October 31; January 3, 1866, No. 1B *Geheim*; to Baron Esceles, February 3, 1866 (HHS: *Nachlass Gablenz*): "Prejudice, rusty ideas, failure to recognize the needs of the times, postpone everything, never take action, always only wait,—it is this that is so disastrous for us."

¹⁹³ R. von Biegeleben p. 299. Belcredi's remark to Malaguzzi, in Luzio, *loc. cit.* pp. 420-422.

¹⁹⁴ Wertheimer: *Graf Julius Andrassy* I, p. 213; Hofmann's words to Mantouffel (Appendix A, No. 11) may be somewhat overdrawn, for diplomatic reasons.

¹⁹⁵ *Origines* VII, p. 141.

infernal Duchies problem, and the word-war with Bismarck¹⁹⁶ — but he awaited orders from above.

Even Moriz Esterhazy was becoming less enamoured of the Prussian alliance.¹⁹⁷ He was already considering a means of patching up a *modus vivendi* with Hungary, in case the German question prematurely pressed for settlement.¹⁹⁸ Still morbidly suspicious of France and Italy,¹⁹⁹ he saw himself forced to look toward Paris for salvation.²⁰⁰ At the same time, Esterhazy was meditating a frank and effective *rapprochement* with the *Mittelstaaten à la Biegeleben*.²⁰¹

But it was still the Emperor who controlled: he left no doubt in the minds of Mensdorff and the other ministers that he himself was the director of Austrian foreign policy.²⁰² He clung tenaciously to the hope of preserving the alliance in peace, but more and more he came to feel that Bismarck would give no quarter. The Gastein *reculade* had resulted in humiliation for Austria, another retreat might endanger the dynasty. Franz Joseph turned a deaf ear to those who would place reason of state (and a *rapprochement* with Italy) above the "honor" of the Habsburg House, and he hearkened to the increasing number whose advice was, "Austria must show her teeth."²⁰³ He and Esterhazy still consoled themselves with the thought that Prussia might back down in the end.

¹⁹⁶ Cf. his remark to General Hauslab (Luzio, *loc. cit.*, p. 427); letter to Duke Ernst of Coburg, March 23, 1866 (Tempelkey: *Herzog Ernst von Coburg und das Jahr 1866*, p. 17).

¹⁹⁷ Vitzthum p. 152.

¹⁹⁸ Vitzthum p. 152 (not on the best authority).

¹⁹⁹ Vitzthum p. 153; Luzio, *loc. cit.* pp. 422, 430-432.

²⁰⁰ Esterhazy to Mensdorff, letter of February 10, 1866 (Appendix A, No. 12).

²⁰¹ This came to the surface in the council of February 21 (Appendix A, No. 14).

²⁰² Luzio, *loc. cit.*, p. 427. Franz Joseph did not always take Esterhazy's advice. He refused to *sell* the Duchies, and he went farther in dealing with Deák at this time than Esterhazy desired (Esterhazy to Mensdorff, letter of February 10, 1866: Appendix A, No. 12).

²⁰³ Esterhazy's words in council of February 21, 1866 (Appendix A, No. 14).

CHAPTER X

MENSDORFF'S PEACE OFFENSIVE

EARLY in the new year, 1866, Franz Joseph entertained the British ambassador at dinner. "His Imperial Majesty," wrote Lord Bloomfield the next day, "seemed under the impression that in Europe there was no present appearance of any serious complications arising; he trusted the year would pass over quietly and peacefully, and that Austria might be able to devote herself more entirely to her internal organization."¹

On the same day, Franz Joseph's foreign minister was estimating the situation more pessimistically: "*In politicis* there is a lull—but the atmosphere is heavy . . . plenty of inflammable stuff is lying about, and on the thrones, little insight and strength."² The Duke of Coburg shared his cousin's pessimism rather than the Emperor's optimism. He saw the nations "lost in a diplomatic blind alley. . . . They stood, as it were, before nothing but walls, behind which nought could lie but war."³—

So began the year 1866.

BISMARCK'S PREPARATIONS

If the imperial mind appeared calmer than the ministerial, at the opening of the year, this discrepancy was soon to disappear.⁴ At the end of January, Mensdorff interrupted the monarch's deliberations with the Hungarians in Pesth, to confront him with Bismarck's curt note demanding explanations

¹ Bloomfield to Clarendon, January 21, 1866, No. 22 Confidential (F. O. 7 Austria 703).

² Mensdorff to Ernst II of Coburg, January 20, 1866 (E. Tempelkey: *Herzog Ernst von Coburg und das Jahr 1866* pp. 13-14).

³ *Memoirs of Ernest II, Duke of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha* IV, p. 207.

⁴ G. W. V, pp. 365-368; *Staatsarchiv* X, p. 331 ff.

on the Altona assembly. Franz Joseph was as indignant with his own *Statthalter* for giving the Prussians an opening, as with Bismarck for pressing the issue. But this time there could be no Gastein. Biegeleben was allowed the desired latitude in drafting the Austrian reply.⁵ On February 7, in the name of the Emperor himself, a formal note couched in language as firm and direct as Abeken's, went off to Berlin.⁶ Mensdorff reiterated therein Austria's exclusive right to administer the affairs of Holstein: as the Emperor refrained from all interference in the northern Duchy, he would not concede Prussia's claim to control his actions in the southern. Thus the divergence of views between the allies received official, and soon public, confirmation.

But if the melody of the Austrian note of February 7 was somewhat shrill, Mensdorff's accompaniment was intended to make it sweeter to the royal ear. In a second despatch of the same date, he asked Karolyi to give in private what amounted to an apology for the Altona assembly, a disavowal of Gablenz' action, and a promise that the error should not occur again.⁷ It was hoped thus to preserve Prussia's friendship without loss of dignity. But by the present note, Austria really burned her bridges, for if Bismarck was going to make a war-issue of the Duchies, Austria had taken too firm a stand to back down. This was a reflection of the change in Franz Joseph's personal attitude toward Prussian demands, since Gastein.

What would Bismarck do? How would he get beyond the wall? An uneasy curiosity possessed Vienna, for upon Prussia's actions now depended war or peace, rivalry or friend-

⁵ Vogt p. 85 note 2.

⁶ Mensdorff to Karolyi, February 7, 1866 (No. 1) (*Staatsarchiv* X, p. 338 ff.).

⁷ Mensdorff to Karolyi, February 7, No. 2 *Vertraulich*: Karolyi was asked to explain that an open disavowal of Gablenz was not possible because the Prussian official press had already heralded Bismarck's note as a "warning" to Austria. It was further pointed out that Prussia's own hands were not clean, for (according to the newspapers), the notorious Committee of 36 had held its session in *Berlin* when it decided to engineer the Altona assembly, against which Bismarck had protested so vigorously in his note of January 26.

ship. Returning to Berlin after a prolonged vacation, Karolyi prophesied that Prussia would try to drive Austria from Holstein by intimidation.⁸ The King, still moderate, was being goaded by his minister-president into the annexationist camp. Bismarck himself was worried over the slump in annexation sentiment, thought Karolyi.⁹

Hardly had Mensdorff read these words when the prophecy began to be realized. Count Platen, called to Berlin by Bismarck for a private interview, retailed to the Austrian envoy many alarming assertions of King William's first minister.¹⁰ Bismarck had pictured to the astonished Hanoverian the unfavorable situation of Austria in a war, threatened by 150,000 Italians in the rear, while Prussia seized the railroad center in Moravia and threw Austria into confusion. He called Platen's attention to the excellent new equipment of the Prussian army, and hinted that it was in Prussia's interest to strike before Austria had adopted the needle-gun.¹¹ In short, concluded Platen, Bismarck wanted war.¹²

In similar key, Bismarck declared to Count Hohenthal of Saxony, that if Austria refused to eject Augustenburg, she would have to decide "whether she had more to fear from the Prussian army or the outcry of the liberal press."¹³ The

⁸ Karolyi's vacation from duty had lasted from early June 1865 to January 10, 1866. His new instructions dictated *no change in policy*. He was informed that Austria desired to preserve the Gastein solution unimpaired. He was ordered to speak in a friendly, calm, but firm tone, and to prevent Prussia from rushing into an annexation policy (Mensdorff to Karolyi, January 10, 1866).

⁹ Karolyi to Mensdorff, January 20, No. 6A

¹⁰ Bismarck's object in the interview was to induce Platen to mediate (Hasse: *Geschichte des Königreichs Hannover* II, part II, p. 276). Actually, Bismarck offered him Holstein while Prussia would annex Schleswig, but Platen committed himself to nothing. Shortly after, he told Karolyi and Count Ingelheim the substance of his interviews (Karolyi to Mensdorff, January 26, No. 7A *Vertraulich*; letter of February 3; Ingelheim to Mensdorff, February 2, No. 5).

¹¹ Karolyi to Mensdorff, letter of February 3. information from Platen, or Stockhausen, envoy of Hanover in Berlin.

¹² Ingelheim to Mensdorff, February 2, No. 5.

¹³ Friesen: *Erinnerungen* II, p. 132.

French likewise contributed to the *Ballplatz*' increasing collection of *Bismarckiana*. Benedetti wrote to Gramont, who hastened to Mensdorff with the news, that Bismarck would not reply to Austria's last note. "All ties with Austria are now broken," he had told Benedetti, "and Prussia is free again to act according to her own interests." He complained that Italy was thinking of buying Venetia for five hundred millions when a war would cost her only two hundred millions. He contemplated making over his ministry with liberals, and then taking the leadership of the German national movement. The *Mittelstaaten* would be forced to follow him in order to escape a revolution.¹⁴— This was unpleasant news for Austria, and Mensdorff was not free from alarm that Bismarck might cut the ground from under Austria's final move in Frankfurt.¹⁵

Besides scattering such incendiary words where they were certain to reach Austrian ears, Bismarck drove his newspapers to accuse Austria of seeking a fight.¹⁶ In his official interviews with Karolyi, however, Bismarck refrained from all recriminations. His reticence was so ominous that Karolyi scented "the calm before the storm."¹⁷ Yet in spite of this official "quarantine,"¹⁸ the Austrian envoy secured many a glimpse behind the scenes, through the *Hausminister*, von Schleinitz, Redern, the chamberlain, and other friends of Austria.¹⁹ All Europe likewise was watching Berlin, where the Bismarck ministry was fighting with its back to the wall. Like other observers, Karolyi came to the belief that the hardy minister-president intended to place before his monarch the

¹⁴ Benedetti's interview with Bismarck on February 14 (*Origines* VII, pp. 297-299) was reported in a private letter to Gramont, who read it to Mensdorff. (Mensdorff to Franz Joseph, *Vortrag*, February 19, 1866: Appendix A, No. 13).

¹⁵ Mensdorff's *Vortrag*, February 19, 1866 (Appendix A, No. 13).

¹⁶ Karolyi to Mensdorff, letter of February 9. The *Kreuzzeitung* and *Provinzialkorrespondenz* were directly inspired.

¹⁷ Karolyi to Mensdorff, February 17, No. 15.

¹⁸ Mensdorff's expression (*Origines* VII, p. 369).

¹⁹ Karolyi to Mensdorff, February 25, tg. No. 11; March 3, No. 18A *Vertraulich*; March 9, No. 21A.

alternative of a change of ministry or a war for the Duchies.²⁰ "If it comes to war," wrote the envoy, "then it is Bismarck's work; if he falls, then collapses the policy of active hostility toward Austria."²¹

The Austrian military attaché, Colonel Pelikan, while minimizing the recruiting and activity in the arsenals,²² reported a remark of von Roon's, that "the Prussians must confront their enemy before the latter have time to think about it."²³ The terrain in Silesia, wrote Pelikan, was well prepared with strategic railways, and when Prussia struck, she would strike quickly.²⁴ He also warned his government that a brigade of cavalry had been moved close to the Austrian border.²⁵

Though busied with the Hungarians, Franz Joseph could not overlook the seriousness of the danger in the north, and summoning Mensdorff to Budapest, he submitted the foreign situation to the council on February 21.²⁶ In a brief opening speech, he posed the question whether Austria should calmly look on at Prussia's demonstrations, or whether "the honor, dignity, and security of Austria called for . . . war-like preparations." However lamentable a conflict between Austria and Prussia, he warned that the Prussian army was more mobile and the Prussian railroads were more advantageous for military strategy than the Austrian, while the imperial army was reduced to the utmost limit, and would require much time to reconstruct. He then sought the advice of the council, from which, strangely enough, the minister of war was absent.

Each minister in turn had something to say, but their remarks, following the lead of Mensdorff, were dedicated to

²⁰ Karolyi to Mensdorff, letters of February 3 and 17.

²¹ Karolyi to Mensdorff, letter of February 3.

²² The French attaché in Berlin had already noted the feverish activity of the Prussian arsenals and the early calling of recruits (*Origines* VII, pp. 171 ff., 231).

²³ "Die Preussen müssen vor dem Feinde stehen bevor dieser daran denkt."

²⁴ Draft of letter from Colonel Pelikan to Colonel Beck (?), Berlin, February 3, 1866 (*Kriegsarchiv: Militärkanzlei*).

²⁵ Draft of letter from Colonel Pelikan to Colonel Beck (?), Berlin, February 17 (*Ibid.*)

²⁶ See the protocol in Appendix A, No. 14.

diplomacy rather than to military preparations. Mensdorff merely stated that Prussia had no outward grounds for a quarrel, but that her precarious internal situation made her next move uncertain. He refrained from proposing a policy one way or the other. Baron Wüllerstorff, the minister of commerce, suggested that the Schleswig-Holstein conflict be submitted either to the powers or to the German Diet. Count Esterhazy raised his voice on behalf of a strong diplomacy. Austria must "show her teeth" to Prussia, declared this apostle of the Prussian alliance. She must give her "allies in the German Diet . . . complete assurance [that] from our side there will be no more talk of concessions to Prussia."²⁷ And lastly, she must secure the peaceful neutrality of France. But Esterhazy could not offer one policy without clinging to the thought of another policy. He could not abandon his innate belief "that in time the reversion of the Duchies to Prussia cannot be prevented."

Returning to the original proposition of the Emperor, the ministers of finance and commerce "strongly advised a peaceful settlement." They pointed out the incalculable consequences of a war on the entire financial and commercial life of the monarchy. The Hungarian chancellor chimed in with the plea that every warlike demonstration should be put off as long as possible. Count Belcredi spoke last,—not a word did he utter to persuade toward peace or toward war. He could only second Esterhazy's suggestion to gain the German *Mittelstaaten*, and warn against the "revolution" which was hiding behind their governments.

In conclusion, Franz Joseph expressed his agreement with the general view "that military preparations be held off for the time being, and that further attempts be made by diplomatic means to preserve the honor and dignity of the country, as well as its interests. The preparations," he added, "could

²⁷ Presumably this attitude, unusual for Esterhazy, was caused by Bismarck's renewed overtures to Italy, and his plan to head the national movement. No other utterance of Esterhazy's so strongly tinged with the Biegeleben policy has yet come to light.

all be drawn up on paper, and the necessary orders had already gone to the war ministry."²⁸ As the military men must have pressed the Emperor to raise the army from its abnormally low status, the result of the council was a victory for the peace element in the cabinet.

To the menaces of Monsieur de Bismarck, the Emperor and his council had decided to reply, not with armaments, nor yet with concessions, but by showing their teeth to Prussia and bestowing their glances upon the *Mittelstaaten*. Despite the fact that this method, tested in March 1865, had ended in failure at Gastein, the same diplomacy was to be tried again, this time with perhaps greater persistence. As before, the policy implied either that Bismarck could be intimidated, or that he could be driven from power. The first assumption was unjustified against a man who had kept Europe at bay in 1864, and had forced Austria to her knees in 1865. The second assumption was far from certain of execution. If neither succeeded, then war must be faced, as all these men well knew.

What did the Emperor and Esterhazy and Belcredi propose to do in such a contingency? "To secure the neutrality of France." But that would not be enough. The only alternatives were to conciliate Italy or to fight both Italy and Prussia at once. Rather than concede an inch to Prussia in 1859, Franz Joseph in the midst of war had grasped Napoleon's hand and ceded the province of Lombardy. Would he profit by that experience and cede another province *before* hostilities, to save many lives, much expense, and perhaps a disastrous defeat?

The program for such a situation had been decided several years before. In 1863 it ran thus: If Austria, as the result of a European war, with the aid of France (and the aid or neutrality of Italy), obtained sufficient territory in Germany and the Balkans, she could cede Venetia to Italy after the war.²⁹ Making allowance for changed conditions, Franz

²⁸ Protocol of the council of February 21, 1866 (Appendix A, No. 14 below).

²⁹ See the secret instructions for Metternich, March 1863, in Appendix A, No. 1 below.

Joseph in 1866 conceived the program as follows: If Austria, as a result of a war with Prussia, in which France and Italy remained neutral, obtained sufficient compensation in Germany (Silesia) and guarantees for the Pope's security, then after the war, Austria would cede Venetia to Italy.³⁰ This was a reasonable program, provided all the actors performed their roles as indicated; it was inelastic if they did not. But Franz Joseph intended to play his part by the book, and trust to luck that the performance would finish with a happy ending.

The Austrian government, then, was taking tremendous chances, first, on the probability of Bismarck's fall, or second, on his failure to secure Italian aid, or third, on his inability to cause a war. If Prussia and Italy made a hard and fast alliance that resulted in war against Austria, Franz Joseph would be forced to fight alone against great odds. Was he confident of victory in such an unequal fight? If so, his diplomacy is easily explained. But important military men shook their heads.³¹ Actually, the Austrian army was sufficient for "ordinary wars" and wars of the German Confederation; "for the war against the Prussian state allied with Italy, Austria's [military] organization was not intended."³²

Only the Emperor refused to look the diplomatic facts in the face. His civilian ministers and advisers with hardly an exception had been willing to make timely concessions for foreign support.³³ Franz Joseph hoped it would not come to war, but if it did,—he hoped for the victory. All his actions from now on were based on these insecure premises, in which most of his counsellors too readily acquiesced. The sequel proved that the house had been built upon sand.

* * * * *

The *rapprochement* with the secondary states, urged by

³⁰ See below, chapter xii.

³¹ For Mensdorff, see below; for Benedek, see Friedjung I, p. 256; for Henikstein, *Ibid.* p. 170.

³² *Oesterreichs Kämpfe im Jahre 1866* I, p. 60 (the official Austrian history of the war).

³³ See chapter xiii.

Esterhazy and Belcredi, had already begun. On February 11, Mensdorff had asked Blome to find out confidentially whether Bismarck's guess was correct, that Bavaria would hold off until she could enter the war on the winning side. Austria, he wrote, would not be satisfied by Pfordten's hiding behind a Frankfurt majority, because "a firm decision by Bavaria would probably draw the majority behind her."³⁴

What the *Ballplatz* feared came to pass. After talking with the mistrustful minister, Blome reported his conviction that Bavaria "would hardly bind herself before action had commenced."³⁵ The young King Ludwig was incalculable, and Pfordten declared separate alliances to be both illegal and impractical.³⁶ But public opinion was so strongly against Bismarck and Prussia, and Pfordten was so committed to Augustenburg, that "it would require the pressure of France to prevent [Bavaria and] the *Mittelstaaten* from taking part . . . on Austria's side."³⁷ If Prussia provoked a crisis by force of arms, Pfordten told Austria, the only correct procedure was to bring the matter to the Diet.³⁸

Beust, too, was making his perennial appeal to Austria to turn frankly to the Diet and bid for popularity in Germany.³⁹ The *Ballplatz* had no need to sound the communicative Saxon minister. "I am just as ready for a scrap as ever," he told Baron Werner, "but who is with me?"⁴⁰ The official Saxon attitude Beust summarized as follows: within the federal pact, Austria can obtain everything from Saxony, even a vote in Frankfurt for strong measures. But outside the *Bund*, the fear of Prussia, and memories of the Seven Years' War hold sway.⁴¹

³⁴ Mensdorff to Blome, February 11.

³⁵ Blome to Mensdorff, February 21, No. 11A.

³⁶ Blome to Mensdorff, February 24, No. 13.

³⁷ Blome to Mensdorff, February 21, No. 11A; February 14, No. 9B *Geheim*.

³⁸ Blome to Mensdorff, February 24, No. 13.

³⁹ Werner to Mensdorff, February 21, No. 14 postscript; February 24, No. 16.

⁴⁰ Werner to Mensdorff, February 18, No. 13: "Ich bin zum Raufen noch eben so bereit wie früher. Wer ist aber jetzt noch mit mir?"

⁴¹ Werner to Mensdorff, February 21, No. 14 postscript.

These words had hardly reached Vienna when their truth became apparent. Reports from Berlin stated that Prussia would demand the neutrality of Saxony, or occupy the country with two army-corps. Coupled with bad news from Munich and Paris, this report shook Beust to the core. He suspected that Pfordten might be bribed with territory to join the enemy in Berlin. He therefore begged Austria not to press him to make a demonstration, but, like Pfordten, he pointed Austria toward Frankfurt.⁴²

The ominous change for the worse in Berlin was reflected also in the despatches of Count Karolyi.⁴³ The Austrian envoy was at last convinced that Bismarck was no longer bluffing, but intended "a great Prussian action in the foreign field."⁴⁴ Three days later, Karolyi telegraphed the following momentous advice:

According to reliable information, Count Bismarck has determined on extreme measures. He intends to send to Vienna at once a decisive dispatch; it is already discussed and prepared; only the King's signature is lacking. . . . But the King . . . wavers and is subject to the opposite influences. . . . Count Bismarck seems to calculate on winning His Majesty over to decisive measures by arguing (against his own conviction) that Austria will yield at the last moment. Perhaps the only chance of shaking the King, therefore, would be to pick up the gauntlet with determination, if it is thrown down, and not for a minute allow a suspicion of a retreat to appear.⁴⁵

On the heels of this telegram, came an astonishing letter from Blome, whose counsels often had weight in Vienna. "For us," he wrote, "the war against Bismarckian Prussia still is better than peace with Bismarck's fall and a 'New Era.' . . . I feel that the aspect of affairs allows us to stand

⁴² Werner to Mensdorff, February 24, No. 16.

⁴³ He wrote that Bismarck's influence had become more firmly entrenched (Karolyi to Mensdorff, February 22, No. 16C). Karolyi purposely avoided meeting Bismarck, not wishing to give him the slightest opportunity to make relations more tense. He learned that Bismarck's plan was to demand the sale of the Duchies by Austria; if refused, he would send troops into Holstein, allowing Austria the same privileges in Schleswig, well knowing that a clash and war would result (Karolyi to Mensdorff, February 23, No. 17C).

⁴⁴ Karolyi to Mensdorff, February 22, No. 16B.

⁴⁵ Karolyi to Mensdorff, February 25, tg. No. 11.

firm to the last ditch."⁴⁶ Thus Blome announced his conversion to the war with Prussia.

Bismarck's abrupt closing of the Prussian parliament, and his calling of Count Goltz from Paris, and General Manteuffel from Schleswig, to a council in Berlin a few days later, suggested that matters were being brought to a head.

* * * * *

Such surmises corresponded indeed to the facts. The plans of many years were ripening rapidly in Bismarck's mind. With the experience gained in the crisis of 1865, he was ready to forge steadily, firmly, vigorously through all obstacles to the goal of war with Austria.⁴⁷ As usual, the two principal factors that the minister-president took into account were the King and Napoleon. With an eye on these personalities he contemplated two major diplomatic strokes: an alliance with Italy, and a drastic reform of the German Confederation.

An alliance with Italy was of course essential to insure a preponderance of man power against Austria. It was also calculated to win Napoleon's favor. But, to remedy the mistake of July 1865, Bismarck saw that he must secure Italy's signature well in advance of the crisis, else William would hesitate to confront Austria with an ultimatum. Preliminary soundings had already been made in Florence by Count Ussedom, and the Italians were soon asking Prussia for serious proposals.⁴⁸ Joyfully, Bismarck undertook to reply by send-

⁴⁶ Blome to Mensdorff, letter of February 25. Blome's change of feeling was based on new "reliable" information he had received from Berlin concerning Bismarck's plans.

⁴⁷ Cf. his words in council of February 28: The war with Austria will in any case take place some day; it is wiser to undertake it in the present advantageous situation than to let Austria choose a time favorable to herself; the internal condition of Prussia does not necessitate a war, but would contribute to make it appear in a favorable light (Sybel IV, pp. 206-207). Cf. Bismarck's instructions for Moltke's mission (*G. W.* V, pp. 395-401).

⁴⁸ For the latest and most complete study of the Prussian-Italian alliance negotiations, see Friedrich Beiche: *Bismarck und Italien in 1866* p. 56 ff. using unpublished Prussian documents, all of which had been previously examined by the present author. The most important Prussian documents are

ing General Moltke to Florence to negotiate a treaty. But before the necessary arrangements for the mission had been completed, La Marmora had sent an eminent Italian general to Berlin. Though these preliminaries were secret, Austria learned of them through spies in Florence, and when General Govone appeared in the Prussian capital, all Europe suspected what was on foot. Nothing stung Franz Joseph so deeply as William's seeming willingness to make common cause with Austria's bitterest foe, and for the first time, the Emperor omitted his usual birthday letter to the King.

To justify this moral breach of the alliance with Austria, Bismarck had declared to all who would hear, that since the Vienna government no longer wished to further Prussian desires for expansion, the alliance was at an end.⁴⁹ Their relations were again on the same footing as that preceding the war with Denmark, or, as Bismarck more picturesquely stated it, in the words of Richelieu to his discarded mistress: "Nous ne sommes pas ennemis: mais nous ne nous aimons plus."⁵⁰ His actions, however, were those of an enemy, for early in February he had released the flood-gates of his press against Austria.⁵¹ This resulted in retaliation by certain Austrian papers,⁵² which Bismarck exploited vigorously as evidence that Austria was determined on war.⁵³

Meanwhile, Bismarck was awaiting the proper moment for the explosion of his bomb of federal reform. He was playing

printed in *G. W. V.*; the Italian documents are found in La Marmora, Chiala, and U. Govone: *Il generale Giuseppe Govone*, the French edition of which has been used in the present work. For the older literature on the subject, see Beiche's bibliography, pp. 132-134.

⁴⁹ See for example, the circular of March 24 (*G. W. V.*, p. 417; cf. p. 388). Bismarck claimed that he made this statement to Karolyi, but, if so, Karolyi did not report it to Vienna.

⁵⁰ *The Diplomatic Reminiscences of Lord Augustus Loftus*, second series, I, p. 45.

⁵¹ Karolyi to Mensdorff, letter of February 9. Cf. Bandmann p. 86.

⁵² See the much-noticed editorial in the *Presse*, February 18, No. 45 (Bandmann p. 118). A clipped copy of this article is found among documents of this time, in the *Kriegsarchiv*.

⁵³ Circular to all countries, February 28 (*G. W. V.*, pp. 385-386).

now for higher stakes than in September 1863 when, in answer to the Austrian reform project, he had with William's assent demanded equality with Austria in the Confederation, and the addition of an all-German directly-elected parliament to the machinery of the old Diet.⁵⁴ His present plan went farther: Austria would be excluded entirely, and the military control over the rest of the Confederation would be divided between Prussia and Bavaria geographically at the river Main.⁵⁵ To sanction the new arrangements, the all-German parliament, previously proposed, was now to be placed in the foreground. To direct election of members, he added universal suffrage by secret ballot.⁵⁶ All in all, this was more than reform, it was truly a revolution that was contemplated by the Prussian minister.

Like all of Bismarck's actions, this too sprang not from a single motive but from many. Again, the King and France were his first considerations. The question of the hegemony in Germany was an issue on which Austria could not offer a compromise sufficiently tempting to entice William's acceptance, as she had done at Gastein. By raising this banner the King would be more deeply committed to war. As for Napoleon, he had not only directed Bismarck to assume the leadership in North Germany, but his system of government was erected upon the principle of universal suffrage. If, however, the French people should drive their Emperor to interfere by

⁵⁴ See chapter I above, and *G. W.* IV, pp. 166-171; *Staatsarchiv* VIII, p. 206 ff.

⁵⁵ On Bismarck's reform plan in general, see Brandenburg: *Untersuchungen* pp. 512-523, as corrective for W. Busch: "Bismarck und die Entstehung des Nord-Deutschen Bundes," in *Historische Zeitschrift* CIII, 1909, pp. 51-70.

⁵⁶ For the development of Bismarck's ideas on universal suffrage, see Brandenburg: *Untersuchungen* pp. 507-511, and *Reichsgründung* II, pp. 132-143, summarizing the results of many earlier studies, such as H. Oncken: "Bismarck, Lassalle, und die Oktroyierung des gleichen und direkten Wahlrechts in Preussen während des Verfassungskonflikts," in *Preussische Jahrbücher* CXLVI, 1911; O. Hell: *Bismarck und der Konstitutionalismus* (Kiel dissertation 1912), correcting earlier accounts; R. Augst: *Bismarck's Stellung zum parlamentarischen Wahlrecht* (Leipzig 1917), a thorough study with extensive bibliography.

force, Bismarck counted on his new parliament to consolidate German national feeling behind Prussia's banners.⁵⁷ This feeling which he could turn against France, he hoped primarily to arouse against Austria. He expected to enlist the force of public opinion in opposition to the particularism of the petty governments and the outworn principles of Habsburg supremacy in Germany.⁵⁸ In the confusion which he foresaw would ensue from these astonishing proposals, he intended to derive a *casus belli* upon an issue which would justify Prussia's militant cause in the eyes of Germany and the rest of Europe, as the quarrel over the Duchies had never done.⁵⁹

The King long resisted the idea of universal suffrage. "Why, that is revolution that you're proposing to me," he cried. "But what harm will that do to your Majesty," replied his intrepid adviser, "if in the general storm you are seated on a rock that will not be touched by the waters, and upon which all who don't wish to perish will have to seek safety?"⁶⁰ Bismarck himself sincerely thought that universal suffrage would work in the interests of conservatism by enfranchising the classes hostile to the Liberal party. This argument was developed at length to win Pfordten and the Tsar Alexander.⁶¹ It doubtless aided to convince the King. But Karolyi was probably near to the truth in his guess that William looked at the entire reform proposal "chiefly from the viewpoint of the idea closest to his heart, the military leadership of Prussia in North Germany, while all other elements of the Prussian proposals touching social, political, state, and even dynastic interests . . . are by no means grasped by His Majesty in all their implications."⁶²

⁵⁷ G. W. V, pp 357-358, 415.

⁵⁸ Keudell p. 228; *Origines* VII, pp. 299-300.

⁵⁹ G. W. V, p. 399; Govone: *Mémoires* p. 462.

⁶⁰ Govone p. 462.

⁶¹ G. W. V, pp. 421, 456-468.

⁶² Karolyi to Mensdorff, letter of April 14. Cf. also, Marcks. *Kaiser Wilhelm I.*, p. 237.

Undoubtedly at this early stage the reform plan had not been thought out in detail in Bismarck's mind. Even the broad outlines he intended to withhold from public knowledge until he had gained the support of Bavaria, and launched the parliament scheme. On February 14, he instructed his envoy in Munich to sound Freiherr von der Pfordten vaguely and discreetly on the subject of federal reform in general.⁶³ Pfordten was happy indeed to express himself, and the conversations were continued by Prince Reuss in a manner to enlist the Bavarian statesman's passion for legal discussions and sympathy for Prussian ambitions. The consequences of this move must, however, be left for the following chapter.

Besides the heavy guns of the Italian alliance and the parliament plan, Bismarck was preparing several smaller field pieces for the attack on Austria. In January, he had indirectly stimulated a new Russian intercession in Vienna on behalf of the Grand Duke of Oldenburg.⁶⁴ To cool the relations further between Russia and Austria, he manufactured out of whole cloth the report that Austria was ready to negotiate the exchange of Venetia for the Danubian Principalities, in which Russia was vitally interested, and he passed the hint along to Gorchakov.⁶⁵ For several weeks this policy succeeded. When the conferences met in Paris to discuss the future of those lands,⁶⁶ from which the reigning Prince Couza was driven in February, Bismarck instructed Goltz to attempt to isolate Austria, and to handle matters in a dilatory fashion so that Austria would be forced to maintain troops on the

⁶³ G. W. V, pp. 380-381.

⁶⁴ G. W. V, p. 353; Werther to Bismarck, January 24, No. 21 (HAA). The results were not quite what Bismarck had anticipated.

⁶⁵ G. W. V, p. 382, No. 245.

⁶⁶ For the upheaval in the Principalities, and the Paris conference, see T. W. Riker: *The Making of Roumania* p. 491 ff.; P. Henry: *L'abdication du Prince Cuza et l'avènement de la dynastie de Hohenzollern au trône de Roumanie* p. 29 ff, 168 ff. Riker's account is based on broader research than Henry's; the latter is chiefly a collection of Austrian, French, and Roumanian documents. The extensive earlier literature is listed by Riker, pp. 567-572.

Rumanian border in her rear as long as possible.⁶⁷ He intended to have Serbia fulfil a similar function later on.⁶⁸

During the previous year, Bismarck had attempted to renew earlier connections with the Hungarian revolutionary movement.⁶⁹ The Prussian envoy in Florence, a liberal freemason, was more successful in this matter. He urged Bismarck to give active assistance to the cause. It was too delicate, however, for Bismarck to deal with until he had burned his bridges, but he told his envoy to keep an eye on it for future use.⁷⁰

As a more immediately practical weapon against Austria, Bismarck tried secretly to buy off the claims of the Prince of Augustenburg by a sum of money, a high title, and important position in the Prussian state.⁷¹ Had this been possible, it would of course have undermined the moral basis of Austria's cause against annexation in the eyes of the *Mittelstaaten*. But the Prince and his advisers did not consider the offer at all, and this piece of Bismarck's artillery proved a dud.

While most of these preparations remained the secrets of the *Wilhelmstrasse* for some time to come, the Vienna cabinet already knew of the two most deadly, and its anxiety was increasing. In view of the alarming reports from Beust, and from the usually calm Karolyi, the time was ripe for the *Ballplatz* to construct its diplomatic defenses, the ground plans

⁶⁷ G. W. V, pp 403-405; Bismarck to Goltz, March 15, No. 98 (PGS, unpublished): "Der wesentlichste Punkt unserer Bestrebungen muss in einer Gruppierung gegen Oesterreich liegen. . . . Mit Ausschluss fester Engagements wollen Ew. Excellenz . . . dahin manovriren, dass die Frage unerledigt bleibt, und Oesterreich bei eventuellem Kriege mit uns nötigt Truppen dort zu lassen."

⁶⁸ Hermann Wendel. *Bismarck und Serbien im Jahre 1866* p 34 ff. In September 1865, the Prussian Consul in Belgrade had called Bismarck's attention to the fact that the Serbs hoped for an Austrian war during which they might gain their independence (Wendel p. 71).

⁶⁹ Count A. Seherr-Thoss. "Erinnerungen aus meinem Leben," in *Deutsche Rundschau* XXVIII, 1881, p. 68. For this subject in general, see A. Kienast *Die Legion Klapka*; Friedjung I, pp. 398-404; Wertheimer: *Bismarck im politischen Kampf* pp. 233-284.

⁷⁰ G. W. V, p. 423.

⁷¹ Jansen-Samwer pp. 565-566, corroborated by documents in HAA.

for which had been maturing in the minds of the minister for foreign affairs and his advisers.

MENSENDORFF'S COUNTER-PREPARATIONS

Count Mensdorff, the principal opponent of the Gastein compromise, had considerably altered his policy by March 1866. Whereas he had been ready to risk a war with Prussia in the previous summer, he now wished to avoid a war as long as possible. This change of attitude was the product of two deductions: first, that while Bismarck had presumably been bluffing in July 1865, he was now bent upon war; second, that the foreign situation was "much worse" than it had been six months earlier. The moral support of France and the material support of the German states seemed less assured than in 1865.⁷² Mensdorff at any rate saw clearly that the Austrian army would be out-numbered by Italy and Prussia, and could not make up the deficiency with the poorly equipped hundred thousand men that the German states might tardily muster. Mensdorff's military judgment turned him strongly against war,⁷³ and his political judgment did not perceive in a defeat the advantages with which some of his ministerial colleagues were later to delude themselves.

Moreover, Mensdorff, like his fellow field-marshal, Gablenz, had a vision of a better order in Germany. Educated in the more liberal atmosphere of Coburg, he was a "moderate" in political ideals, and tolerant in religion. He wished to see the sovereigns march at the head of the progressive ranks.⁷⁴

⁷² Mensdorff's memorandum of October 26, 1866 (Wertheimer: "Zwei ungedruckte Denkschriften des oesterreichischen Ministers Graf Mensdorff über das Jahr 1866," in *Preussische Jahrbücher* CLXXX, 1920, Heft 3, pp. 338-339).

⁷³ Wertheimer, *loc. cit.*, p. 337.

⁷⁴ Certain remarks in a letter to his cousin, Ernst of Coburg, show a closer affinity to the ideals of Biegeleben than those of Esterhazy. "Much could be said about Germany,—plenty of explosive material is at hand, and little insight and strength on the thrones. Radical upheaval-ideas opposed to reaction, the fruits of a confused philosophy in combat with dark bigotry and

Translated into political terms, this progressive outlook of Mensdorff's led him to entertain two programs for the betterment of the German situation, schemes quite at variance with each other. The first was a friendly dualism between the two leading German powers.⁷⁵ Why did Prussia try to destroy this relationship, he argued, when by a little more patience she would within five years peacefully attain the hegemony of North Germany?⁷⁶ A war would profit France alone, and therefore Bismarck should wait until the upheaval that would come at Napoleon's death.⁷⁷ Mensdorff at heart was a member of the school which would gradually make concessions to Prussia in order to preserve Austrian possession of Venetia.⁷⁸ But, no more than Biegeleben or Franz Joseph, was he ready to be hustled and bullied by Bismarck to abdicate the position of supremacy in Germany. It must come gradually, and in return for friendly diplomatic cooperation in other fields. But Bismarck's need for immediate victories, not gradual ones, had by February and March 1866, relegated such peaceful evolution to the limbo of impossibilities.

With friendly dualism eliminated, Mensdorff took up another plan for the future of Germany: in this case a plan of defensive action *against* Prussia. As the clouds began to gather in the winter of 1865-1866, Mensdorff suggested to his monarch and Count Belcredi "a dictatorship over Austria and

superstition, one direction threatening all authority on earth and in Heaven, the other threatening rational freedom." (Mensdorff to Ernst II, letter of January 20, 1866: Tempelтей pp. 13-14. Cf. Wertheimer, *loc. cit.*, p. 335).

⁷⁵ Mensdorff to Ernst II, letter of March 31: "From childhood I was brought up in the belief that the unity of the German powers was an essential for the security of Germany and a guarantee for the power and greatness of both states." (Glaser: "Fürstliche Gegner Bismarcks im Kampfe um den Krieg 1866," *Die Grenzboten* LXXII, 1913, Heft 2, pp. 18-20. Excerpts in Tempelтей pp. 29-30, and Mager: *Herzog Ernst II und die Schleswig-Holsteinsche Frage, 1863-1866*, p. 36).

⁷⁶ Words to Gagern (Vogt pp. 93-94); words to Fröbel, early May 1866 (Fröbel p. 425).

⁷⁷ Mensdorff to Ernst II, letter of March 31 (Glaser pp. 18-19; Tempelтей pp. 27-28; Mager p. 35). Mensdorff's guess was incorrect by only two years.

⁷⁸ Wertheimer, *loc. cit.*, p. 339.

Germany" to be launched by "an appeal to the people within and without Austria," and "the calling of a representative body . . . indispensable in carrying out such a measure."⁷⁹ Just what he meant by a dictatorship is not clear, but the context would point to an attempt like Schmerling's (1863) to lead a German national movement and give it a more "popular" basis.

The elements of this scheme Mensdorff drew from others: Schmerling and Biegeleben, Beust⁸⁰ and Blome.⁸¹ The minister felt that Rechberg had made a mistake in November 1863, when, instead of leading the general outburst of feeling on behalf of Augustenburg, he had closed the deal with Prussia against the Diet;⁸² and he wished now, if Prussia broke the alliance, to begin where Rechberg had stopped. This "federal" plan must surely have been encouraged by that astute friend of the Diet, Hofrat von Biegeleben. Like Bismarck, Mensdorff now contemplated linking the Duchies question to the vastly larger problem of federal reform. He would draw the German princes away from Prussia with the cry of "Schleswig-Holstein independent," and the people, with the watch-word of a "German parliament."⁸³ Under those banners, a Bismarck in the *Ballplatz* might have outplayed the Bismarck in the *Wilhelmstrasse*.⁸⁴

⁷⁹ *Ibid.* p. 337. Rumors of this reached the ears of the Prussian Crown Prince (*Kaiser Friedrich III. Tagebücher von 1848-1866*, p. 420). Mensdorff was also urging Franz Joseph and the cabinet to call an *ad hoc* parliament of the entire Austrian monarchy to aid in raising a necessary loan. The plan was not approved (Werther to Thile, letter of February 1. PGS: *Nachlass Manteuffel*).

⁸⁰ Since December 1864, Beust had been urging Mensdorff to forestall Bismarck in offering Germany a parliament.

⁸¹ The "appeal to the German people" (letter of February 25, to Mensdorff). Blome probably did not have a parliament in mind, but only an appeal for an independent Schleswig-Holstein.

⁸² Edelsheim to Roggenbach, July 30, 1865, No. 133 *Vertraulich* (BGL).

⁸³ Mensdorff told Bloomfield that if Bismarck tried to annex by force, Austria would appeal to Germany, and such an appeal as Austria would make could not pass unheeded (Bloomfield to Clarendon, March 1, No. 76 Confidential, F. O. 7 Austria 704).

⁸⁴ Cf. Lenz' view, that the Schleswig-Holstein crisis came three months too late for Austria (Lenz: *Geschichte Bismarcks* p. 219).

Before the February crisis, Mensdorff had broached some such idea to Franz Joseph.⁸⁵ As soon as he learned that Bismarck, too, was contemplating going to the people with *Bundesreform*, Mensdorff raised the idea again in Vienna, as a counterstroke to prevent Prussia from reaping the victory "on the federal terrain which we had reserved for ourselves."⁸⁶ From Belcredi, the parliament met with the "strongest opposition,"⁸⁷ — from Esterhazy, little but skepticism,⁸⁸ — and Franz Joseph, since the *Fürstentag*, was mistrustful of heroic measures. At this crucial moment (February, March) even Beust desired to avoid provoking Prussia.⁸⁹ Supported only by Biegeleben, doubtful of South Germany, lacking the courage of his convictions, Mensdorff dropped his far-sighted, if somewhat nebulous, plan. This hesitation he afterward bitterly regretted, as one of his two greatest mistakes.⁹⁰

Barred from heroics, Mensdorff contented himself with a policy wiser for a minister not endowed with the consummate ingenuity and manifold expedients of a Bismarck. Austria could hardly have been in a stronger moral position in relation to Prussia. All Europe knew that Prussia wanted the Duchies, that Bismarck wanted to divide German hegemony with Austria or drive her from the confederation, whereas Franz Joseph wanted peace to settle his internal difficulties.⁹¹ The sympathies of the neutral public turned against the one who wished to break the peace. Besides this, the hundred thousand men of the German states, which Austria in her isolation dared not scorn, would not march save on behalf of the one who strove hardest to preserve the *pax germanica*.⁹² Mens-

⁸⁵ Mensdorff's *Vortrag*, February 19, 1866 (Appendix A, No. 13).

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

⁸⁷ Mensdorff's memorandum (Wertheimer, *loc. cit.*, p. 337).

⁸⁸ Deduced from Esterhazy's general policies, and the fact that Mensdorff would surely have mentioned his approval, had he given it.

⁸⁹ Wertheimer, *loc. cit.*, p. 337.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

⁹¹ Cf. Bernstorff's opinion (*G. W. V.*, p. 390); Pfordten's words (Reuss to Bismarck, March 9, No. 16 *Vertraulich*, HAA).

⁹² *Oesterreich's Kämpfe* I, p. 73.

dorff had learned well the lesson of 1859, and the Emperor, too, was determined not to repeat the reckless impulsiveness of the ultimatum against Sardinia.⁹³ While the value of Austria's moral position was clear to all the ministers, yet it was Mensdorff in particular who made it the starting-point for a great peace offensive during the months of March and April 1866.

The foreign minister attempted to construct, first, a diplomatic, and later, a military phalanx of the South German and other "loyal" *Mittelstaaten* to cooperate in the Diet, and if necessary, on the field of battle, to defend the federal system against attack. These efforts, advocated by both Esterhazy and Biegeleben, will be followed in the next chapter.

In respect to Prussia, Mensdorff's first principle,—and here, too, he undoubtedly had the backing of Franz Joseph and Esterhazy,—was to use all the arts of diplomacy to prevent Bismarck from causing a rupture.⁹⁴ His second principle,—with which Franz Joseph probably did not agree until March,⁹⁵—was to seize the first good opportunity to overthrow Bismarck.⁹⁶ And his third: if Bismarck did succeed in remaining in power and provoking a war, Austria should not commit a second "Gastein," but "every consideration must be dropped and every expedient mobilized" against Prussia.⁹⁷ In other words, Mensdorff would first "wage peace" against Bismarck; if that failed, he would wage diplomatic war, take the Schleswig-Holstein question to the Diet, and make an Alliance with *l'infâme* in Paris.

⁹³ Karolyi's words to Thile (memorandum of Thile, March 25, HAA).

⁹⁴ "We must leave to Bismarck the initiative of the first act of hostilities, in order to be able to load upon him the entire responsibility for it." (Mensdorff's *Vortrag*, February 19, 1866. Appendix A, No. 13).—To Gablenz, Mensdorff wrote: "It is highly essential that we give Prussia no handle from which to derive a formula for a declaration of war." (Letter of March 13, HHS: *Nachlass Gablenz*).

⁹⁵ The instructions to Karolyi dated March 1 expressly disclaimed the intention of attacking Bismarck personally.

⁹⁶ Wertheimer, *loc. cit.*, p. 336. Biegeleben seems to have favored such a stroke (R. von Biegeleben: *Ludwig Freiherr von Biegeleben* p. 299).

⁹⁷ Mensdorff's *Vortrag*, February 19, 1866 (Appendix A, No. 13).

Few, if any, of these lines of action were originated by the foreign minister himself. The plan to avoid commitments to France until Prussia had forced a rupture dated at least from 1862;⁹⁸ the final move toward the Diet, from December 1864.⁹⁹ All except the design to overthrow Bismarck, had been foreshadowed in Franz Joseph's exposé of foreign policy to the council of October 31, 1864. The only element of which Mensdorff claimed authorship was the "plan to break the Bismarck regime by making it impossible for him to register a *casus belli*."¹⁰⁰ It was this part of the program to which he devoted himself, body and soul, and which during March and April he made his very own.

* * * * *

By February 28, the *Ballplatz* was ready to translate principles into action. The peace offensive began. At the moment when Bismarck and the military men, in council assembled, were trying to persuade William to draw the sword,¹⁰¹ Mensdorff was despatching to his lieutenants in the leading capitals, instructions for the expected emergency. In firmness and determination they left nothing to be desired. To Munich, Stuttgart, Karlsruhe, and Darmstadt, he showed the seriousness of the situation, urged cooperation, and reserved more definite overtures until Prussia had shown her hand.¹⁰² To London, Petersburg, and Paris, he made both a request and an offer. Arguing that a declaration of neutrality would only encourage Prussian aggression, he urged England, Russia, and France to frown upon the state which threatened the peace of Europe, and to bring pressure to bear in Berlin.¹⁰³ But if Prussia should actually break the Gastein convention, and thereby free Austria's hand in respect to the Duchies,

⁹⁸ Hengelmüller, in *Deutsche Revue* XXXVIII, 1913, Heft 3, pp. 302-303.

⁹⁹ See chapter v above.

¹⁰⁰ Mensdorff's memorandum of September 21, 1866 (Wertheimer, *loc. cit.*, p. 336).

¹⁰¹ Sybel IV, pp. 206-208.

¹⁰² Mensdorff to Blome, Handel, Zulauf, and Brenner, February 28.

¹⁰³ Mensdorff to Metternich and Apponyi, March 1, No. 2; to Révertera, March 2.

Austria would place the question of Holstein before the German Diet, and that of Schleswig before a conference of the powers, to which the Diet also would be invited.¹⁰⁴

"We will face the danger with all possible energy," he concluded, "trusting to our good Right and the devotion of the Emperor's subjects. But we are also convinced that . . . we shall in this case defend, not only our own interests, but the cause of European equilibrium itself. . . . And no Power in Europe will have occasion to rejoice if, unassisted, we succumb."

To Metternich, the Austrian minister wrote further:

"It is essential for us to be on a friendly footing with France, and in appearance even more friendly than it is in reality. This is so important at the present moment that we must subordinate to it our traditional policy in Turkey."¹⁰⁵

In the conference on the Danubian Principalities Mensdorff appeared to be ready to abandon the integrity of Turkey for the French policy of erecting the two Principalities into an independent state. He refused, however, to discuss the Venetian exchange for Wallachia and Moldavia, and he shied at the prospect of a general congress.

"If we could, however, receive some sort of positive guarantee [that the question of Venetia would be excluded from the discussions] . . . we would place no further obstacle in the way of the realization of one of the favorite ideas of the Emperor Napoleon [viz. the congress]."

Mensdorff concluded, nevertheless, that the only possible *entente* with Paris upon this ticklish subject was for both states to keep silent about it.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁴ Mensdorff to Metternich and Apponyi, March 1, No. 1; to Revertera, March 2 (cf. *Origines* VII, p. 401). The germ of this two-fold plan is to be found in Esterhazy's remarks at the council of February 21 (see Appendix A, No. 14), and an idea long held in the *Ballplatz* to convoke again the London conference. This idea was broached anew to Mensdorff by Baron Meysenbug (letter of February 22, HHS: *Nachlass Rechberg*).

¹⁰⁵ Mensdorff to Metternich, March 1, No. 4 *Réservée* (HHS; printed in Henry: *L'abdication du Prince Cuza* p. 203-206). See Riker pp. 516-517 for Mensdorff's Rumanian policy at this time. Cf. Henry pp. 49-51.

¹⁰⁶ Mensdorff to Metternich, March 1, 1866, No. 4 *Réservée* (Henry pp. 203-206).

In the dispatches to Berlin, Biegeleben gladly followed Karolyi's advice to pick up the gauntlet with determination:

" . . . the Kaiser entirely approves your calm but firm declarations to Bismarck. We share your opinion unreservedly, that we must not for one moment allow the impression to arise that Austria would retreat before a threatening ultimatum from Prussia. . . . We would consider a war between the German Powers an immeasurable misfortune, a simultaneous war against Prussia and Italy a danger demanding the utmost exertion,—but Austria is not a Power to be deprived of honor, influence, and prestige, or to be pushed from well-earned positions without drawing the sword . . . and if Count Bismarck wishes to appeal to arms to win the Duchies, to which Prussia has no right, or at least no more right than Austria, then there surely must be men in Berlin, who hold this beginning to be a wanton and unrighteous playing with human welfare.

We are not writing this to challenge or to attack Bismarck personally. And we know that you will not use our words except to keep the peace, our warmest desire. . . . Everything depends on restraining the Berlin Court from raising impossible demands, before which we would not bow." ¹⁰⁷

Biegeleben's words rang with Habsburg pride, more than with Mensdorff's calm reasonableness. In this, the note bade fair to defeat its own object. Through Karolyi's connections at court, the envoy made certain that William was truly apprised of Austria's attitude.¹⁰⁸ Had the note arrived in Berlin *before* the council, and had it been read to Bismarck *verbatim* to report to the King, a procedure which Karolyi avoided, it might well have provoked William to give his warlike minister a free hand against Austria.

But such was not the outcome of the Prussian council. On March 3, Karolyi could report the King's words "that all peaceful methods would first be tried," and soon after, he correctly guessed that Bismarck was sounding Napoleon before courting a rupture.¹⁰⁹ Anxious to gain time, Bismarck treated the envoy to the old, old complaint that Austria was going

¹⁰⁷ Mensdorff to Karolyi, March 1. This gives documentary confirmation of Friedjung's interpretation of Franz Joseph's policy (I, pp. 160-161).

¹⁰⁸ On March 3, Schleinitz assured Karolyi of this (Karolyi to Mensdorff, March 3, No. 18A *Vertraulich*).

¹⁰⁹ Karolyi to Mensdorff, March 3, No. 18A *Vertraulich*; March 7, tg. No. 15.

back on her promises of dualistic cooperation with Prussia. He also revamped the compensation question.¹¹⁰ He suggested that Austria help him to overcome William's prejudice against a land-exchange by confronting him with a sort of ultimatum-offer to take or leave.¹¹¹ Karolyi was naive enough to take him half seriously, but warned his own government not to tread upon that insecure and illusory ground.¹¹²

Some time before, Mensdorff had offered to reopen the negotiations on Schleswig-Holstein's future, and had declared his readiness to entertain any serious Prussian suggestion, though Austria was satisfied with the *status quo*.¹¹³ Taking Karolyi's cue, he now asserted that the Duchies should be an independent state under Prussian influence.¹¹⁴ With an eye to Russia, he let it be known that the Grand Duke of Oldenburg might still be acceptable, if his sovereignty were *guaranteed*, with a prospect of stability and "compensating advantages" to Austria.¹¹⁵ In reality, however, Mensdorff saw no chance of an arrangement as long as Bismarck remained in power,¹¹⁶ but he lost no opportunity to impress the King of Prussia with the idea that the earlier offers still held good, hoping that if Bismarck should fall, William might be glad to

¹¹⁰ Karolyi to Mensdorff, March 5, No. 20.

¹¹¹ Karolyi to Mensdorff, March 31, No. 27B *Vertraulich*.

¹¹² Karolyi to Mensdorff, March 5, No. 20.

¹¹³ Werther to Bismarck, January 31, No. 31 (AGEV); Karolyi to Mensdorff, March 9, No. 21A; Bloomfield to Clarendon, March 12, No. 95 Confidential (F. O. 7 Austria 704).

¹¹⁴ Werther to Bismarck, March 15, No. 76 *Vertraulich* (HAA). Both Karolyi and Gablenz urged Mensdorff to repeat publicly the concessions of June 1865, and to advise Augustenburg to renew his far-reaching offers with all publicity, in order to expose Prussia's land lust and throw the responsibility for lack of agreement upon her (Karolyi to Mensdorff, letter of March 21). But such a move might have given Bismarck an excuse for a rupture. Mensdorff saved the suggestion to use when and if Austria should eventually appeal to the Diet (cf. Mensdorff to Karolyi, April 26, No. 1).

¹¹⁵ *Origines* VII, p. 400. Mensdorff did not specify what the compensating advantages were. Similar remarks to Count Stackelberg were well calculated to make the best impression on Russia (Werther to Bismarck, March 15, No. 76 *Vertraulich*, HAA).

¹¹⁶ Bloomfield to Clarendon, March 15, No. 105 Confidential (F. O. 7 Austria 704).

accept something less than annexation, to preserve the alliance.¹¹⁷

A little later, Mensdorff privately threw out hints of the old partition proposal, which he had heretofore opposed, and he confessed to Gramont that "he cared little what accessions of territory Prussia gained outside of Germany; [Austria] would consent to the annexation of Schleswig, if absolutely necessary to avoid a war, provided that Holstein . . . conserved its federal independence."¹¹⁸ At the same moment, the Vienna *Fremdenblatt* bruited the division idea, doubtless under official inspiration.¹¹⁹ In point of fact, Franz Joseph himself seems to have been ready at this time to accept the complete partition,—the Blome scheme,—rejected the previous August.¹²⁰ Here, then, we have the key to Mensdorff's offer of March 1 to the three neutral powers: if a European conference allotted Schleswig to Prussia, Austria's face would be saved before the German states, which would be forced to content themselves with half a loaf, viz. Holstein under Augustenburg.

This important modification of Austrian policy came too late, as usual. Bismarck had already seized upon a greater issue, the reform of the Confederation, that far overshadowed little Schleswig-Holstein.¹²¹ No longer the partition of the Duchies,—nothing less than the partition of Germany would make Bismarck pause in his vigorous onrush. The division

¹¹⁷ Mensdorff to Karolyi, March 22 and 29. To Gahlenz, Mensdorff wrote: "The maintenance of the *status quo* of the Gastein convention is our first aim. Our second is to secure a means of settlement, which may possibly take form more quickly from the present crisis." (Letter of March 13).

¹¹⁸ Gramont, March 27 (*Origines* VIII, p. 97).

¹¹⁹ Werther to Bismarck, March 28, No. 90 (HAA). Whether the *Fremdenblatt* got it from the *Ballplatz* or from Gramont, who seems to have spread the idea, is not clear.

¹²⁰ Mensdorff would hardly have made such an explicit statement to Gramont, had he not had the Kaiser's approval. Cf. Franz Joseph's remarks in council of April 25 (Redlich: *Das oesterreichische Staats- und Reichsproblem* II, p. 802).

¹²¹ Bismarck launched it in a circular on March 24 (*G. W. V.*, pp. 416-419) but had been discussing it with Pfordten since February 14 (*Ibid.* V, p. 380 f.).

of German hegemony was not offered by Vienna. But why was it not proposed at first *sub rosa* by Berlin? If the Gablenz compromise of two months later had been quietly sponsored by Bismarck in early March, and presented to the *Hofburg* before the generals and the armies had come into the foreground, and before Austria had become too deeply engaged with the German states, then some such settlement of outstanding issues might not have met with absolute refusal from Franz Joseph.¹²² But his acceptance must have been voluntary, not "extorted"¹²³ by threats and sword-rattling, it must have been gained through friendly secret *pourparlers*, and liberal concessions to Habsburg pride, not by a public ultimatum. In the *Hofburg*, prestige was rated higher than the possession of a province. Franz Joseph was six months behind Bismarck's diplomatic schedule, and in reality, Bismarck himself at this time was in no mood for compromise. He was moving heaven and earth to incriminate Austria in the eyes of the King, and to consummate his alliance with Italy. And so the last opportunity to come to an agreement, if opportunity it was, passed unnoticed into history.

While the Emperor and his foreign minister were pondering what they might offer to Prussia if Bismarck fell, they were more deeply concerned with the immediate present, in which Bismarck bulked too large for their comfort. The Prussian minister-president had succeeded admirably in creating a tense atmosphere. He wished to produce a "state of nerves" in Vienna, knowing that in such a situation cool counsels give way to reckless ones, and the military men supersede the diplomatists.

Franz Joseph and his military advisers were, it is true, be-

¹²² On May 25, Franz Joseph told Anton von Gablenz that "it was regrettable that these proposals had not been made six or eight weeks earlier, when they would certainly have been accepted." (Sybel IV, p. 284). But would Franz Joseph really have accepted a situation in which, as he himself admitted, "Prussia would have the lion's share?"

¹²³ Biegeleben's expression, "*abtrotzen*" (Mensdorff to Karolyi, March 1, 1866).

coming agitated.¹²⁴ The Berlin council, attended by the chief of staff and the adjutant-general, as well as by Manteuffel, had indubitably discussed a war with Austria.¹²⁵ Bismarck was known to be angling for aid from Italy.¹²⁶ On March 2, the Vienna war office ordered six regiments and six batteries in Galicia and Transylvania to be "ready to march."¹²⁷ Five days later, Franz Joseph called together a few of his chief officers to consider the defense of the realm.¹²⁸ Though justified on military grounds, this was an unwise move politically. It could not be kept secret. The papers exaggerated its import. It was interpreted as a threatening act, since no civilians were present.

Appearances were, of course, deceitful. The Berlin council, in intent, boded less good for peace than the Vienna conference. The former considered whether to attack Austria; the latter, how to defend Austria from attack. But appearances could be used by enemies to injure Habsburg policy in the eyes of Europe. "Austria had called the first war council."

It is highly probable that before or during this conference of March 7, the struggle began between Count Mensdorff on the one hand, and the minister of war and chief of staff on the other hand, over the question of troop movements.¹²⁹ It

¹²⁴ For several precautionary measures taken at this time, see Appendix C.

¹²⁵ "Nach Berliner Telegramm deuten alle Anzeichen . . . darauf hin, dass entscheidende Beschlüsse im Sinne der Gf. Bismarck'schen Politik im Ministerrat gefasst wurden . . ." (Mensdorff to Crenneville, March 3 tg., *Kriegsarchiv: Militärkanzlei*); Karolyi to Mensdorff, March 5, No. 20. The correctness of this information is proved by accounts of the proceedings in Sybel IV, pp. 206-208; in Goltz' letter to Bernstorff, March 26, 1866, in Ringhoffer: *The Bernstorff Papers* II, p. 239; and in *Friedrich III. Tagebucher von 1848-1866* pp. 541-544.

¹²⁶ Bloomfield to Clarendon, March 8, No. 85 Confidential (F. O. 7 Austria 704).

¹²⁷ *Oesterreichs Kämpfe im Jahre 1866* I, p. 75.

¹²⁸ This conference of less than a dozen men has been magnified into a council of marshals and leading generals from all of the crown lands, by Sybel (IV, pp. 221-222), Friedjung (I, pp. 167, 175), and Stern (IX, p. 455). For the correct details, see *Oesterreichs Kämpfe* I, p. 70 (which Sybel cites!), and especially Appendix C below.

¹²⁹ Sybel IV, p. 223, confirmed by Werther's dispatches. The official minutes of the conference betray no evidence of this discussion. (See Appendix C: Austrian military preparations).

was the duty of the military men to call attention to the exposed situation of Austria. The Prussians were bound to strike Bohemia-Moravia either through Saxony or Silesia. Yet the northern border was unprotected, and the army in that province was, for financial reasons, cut down even below the usual *peace* strength. What more natural and justifiable than to raise the strength to normal, and to place certain regiments to guard the passes?

Count Mensdorff, as a capable general, realized the strategic danger from a Prussian invasion as clearly as his military colleagues. But his sixteen months in the foreign office had given him a broader point of view. For the very reason that Austria was on the defensive and wished earnestly to avoid war, she had to place greater dependence on diplomacy. The movement of troops, however justified, might do more moral harm to Austria's cause than actual good, and Mensdorff set his face squarely against such action.

Austria was at the mercy of her military system. She required seven or eight weeks to mobilize, Prussia four.¹⁸⁰ Besides that, her excessive reductions in the army made her doubly vulnerable. As a result, Franz Joseph was in a dilemma: either he must lose the diplomatic battle by mobilizing first; or he must endanger his realm by waiting for Prussia to take that step. If Austria won the diplomatic battle against Bismarck, then peace was probable,—though opinions differed on the chances of winning. If Austria began troop movements, the chances of war were greatly increased. Weighing the prospects of Mensdorff's diplomacy against the desire for immediate security, Franz Joseph decided for the former. It was an important victory for the policies of the foreign minister.

Count Mensdorff's troubles, however, were only beginning. While holding back the generals on one side, he had to com-

¹⁸⁰ The official historian of the war states that Austrian mobilization plans required seven weeks (*Oesterreichs Kämpfe* I, p. 73 note 1); the chief of staff estimated eight weeks, after a week of preparing orders (Henikstein's memorandum of March 17, in Appendix C below).

bat an equally dangerous pacifism centering in Bavaria, and already weakening the courage of other secondary states, like Würtemberg and Saxony. The Bavarian prime minister was paralyzed with fear of France, and more than half won to neutrality by Bismarck's effective flattery and confidences.¹³¹ Piqued at Austria's more formal treatment of him,¹³² Freiherr von der Pfordten was determined to stand upon the strict letter of the federal pact. On March 8, Pfordten sent a memorandum to several of the German states, the gist of which was this: do everything to avoid war; if this is impossible, remain neutral until the burning question is taken to the Diet, and the Diet renders its decision.¹³³

Such advice from the leading *Mittelstaat* brought dismay to the *Ballplatz*, for the move against Prussia in Frankfurt, the placing of the fate of the Duchies before the Diet, could not be the first, but only the last move in the game with Prussia. With it, war would begin. While it was natural that Bavaria did not want to be used as a cat's paw of Austria to frighten Prussia into concessions, yet it was a matter of life and death to concert a plan of operations *before* the rupture.

Franz Joseph was persuaded that the time had come to counteract Pfordten's plea of neutrality by a gesture toward Frankfurt. In an important note to Blome, which was circularized in strictest secret to the courts of Stuttgart, Dresden, Karlsruhe, and Darmstadt, Austria now officially promised for the first time, if Prussia drew the sword, "to refer all further deliberations in the Duchies question to the Confederation, to recognize its decision and to support it with our entire strength."¹³⁴ At the same time, Austria would demand the aid of the Diet against the aggressor. That would mark the end of legitimate neutrality. Not on March 16, as hith-

¹³¹ G. W. V, pp. 391-394; Blome to Mensdorff, March 3, No. 14A *Geheim*.

¹³² Reuss to Bismarck, March 9, No. 16 *Vertraulich* (HAA).

¹³³ Vogt p. 86. Circular dated March 8: Count Bray read the bulk of it to Mensdorff without leaving a copy. One was later obtained through the kindness of Varnbüler (Handel to Mensdorff, letter of March 13).

¹³⁴ Mensdorff to Blome, March 12, No. 1; circular to Stuttgart, Dresden, Karlsruhe, Darmstadt, March 12.

erto supposed,¹³⁵ but four days earlier, this important program was first made known officially to the five South German states. This promise to turn to the Diet,—the condition that Pfordten had laid down in his circular,—was put forward as a concession, for which Austria asked him to yield his stand against military conversations. Mensdorff pointed out that he did not ask for alliances; but in order to decide whether to defend Saxony and Mainz, it was necessary to know upon what Bavarian and other troops he could count.¹³⁶

The military result of this *démarche* must remain for the next chapter. The political result was satisfying. The deadly effect of the "neutrality" ideal was counteracted by Austria's swift and unequivocal assurance of her true-blue federal loyalty and intentions. Her friends took heart again, and felt her leadership.

PRECIPITATE ACTION BY AUSTRIA

Shortly after, two mistaken moves on the part of Franz Joseph bade fair to ruin the work of peace so auspiciously begun. These acts were the sending of troops to Bohemia, and the Karolyi interpellation in Berlin. As much misunderstanding exists concerning these incidents, and no present account is sufficiently detailed to do them justice, they will be examined more closely here.

In the tense and nervous state of mind of the Austrian government at this time, small bits of news from Berlin claimed a larger attention than they otherwise would, and an important act might be determined by a single telegram. At this very moment, several events seemed to indicate to the *Ballplatz* that Bismarck was getting ready for war in earnest. On March 8, they learned that his efforts in Florence had borne fruit, and that La Marmora was sending an Italian general to Berlin to negotiate.¹³⁷ Three days later, came a report

¹³⁵ Sybel IV, p. 225; Friedjung I, p. 177; Stern IX, p. 455.

¹³⁶ Mensdorff to Blome, March 12, No. 1 and No. 2.

¹³⁷ Meysenbug to Karolyi, March 8, tg. (Correct Friedjung I, p. 167, who thought the news did not reach Vienna till March 12 or 13).

from Karolyi, crowded full of warning news: the Prussian minister-president was trying to arouse public opinion to the idea of a war, by articles in the press,¹³⁸ and by calling out the military levy in Berlin "in the very manner, speed, and schedule, and with the very same strength *as would be the case in a regular mobilization*,"—that is, an actual rehearsal of mobilization in Berlin.¹³⁹ Through English sources, Karolyi learned that Bismarck was stirring up hostile intrigues in Belgrade. But, most disturbing of all, Count Hohenthal had been warned that the Prussian general staff contemplated the invasion of Saxony and the seizure of the passes into Bohemia, "at the instant war was decided upon in principle . . . before the mobilization of the army was complete."¹⁴⁰ Both he and Karolyi agreed that Prussia would act solely on the principle of military necessity, and Karolyi therefore advised his government to forestall such a move by a military arrangement with Saxony *at once*. Bismarck, he concluded, had no alternative but to drag King and public with him, or resign,—and the chances of his resignation were small.¹⁴¹

The news from Berlin was confirmed and underlined by an appeal from Dresden. Beust sent his Vienna envoy post haste to lay the alarming facts before Mensdorff, and remarked caustically to Baron Werner, that he had not heard of any Austrian preparations for the defense of Saxony. So much the more urgent was it, he said, for Austria to turn to the Diet, either directly, or through the group of three states.

¹³⁸ Cf. Hahn: *Fürst Bismarck, Sein politisches Leben und Wirken* I, pp. 370-372.

¹³⁹ Karolyi to Mensdorff, March 9, No. 21A, reached Vienna probably March 11. Bismarck later claimed, probably truly, that this levy was called by the war department unknown to him.

¹⁴⁰ This remark of "a Prussian officer of the general staff" was brought indirectly to Hohenthal (Karolyi to Mensdorff, March 9, No. 21A; Werner to Mensdorff, March 10, No. 20; Hassel II, p. 220 note). I share Friedjung's guess that Bismarck may have been the prime mover. For the details of this interesting episode, see Friedjung I, pp. 165-166. Moltke had actually contemplated such a seizure of Saxony *à la* Frederick the Great. Cf. Roon's remark above, this chapter.

¹⁴¹ Karolyi to Mensdorff, March 9, No. 21A.

Baron Werner's query whether the time was ripe, the minister brushed aside impatiently:—was it wise to let ourselves be taken unawares through overscrupulous regard for the letter, when the danger of war was evident in the atmosphere?¹⁴²

At the news of the danger to Saxony, Franz Joseph had thought it his duty at last, despite Mensdorff's warnings, to order troops to the Bohemian border. On the same day, a second military conference ratified these movements and sanctioned others.¹⁴³ The Ringelsheim brigade was sent to guard the passes from Saxony, and a few other battalions were to be moved gradually during the next six weeks.¹⁴⁴ Arrangements were made to receive the retreating Saxon army if Prussia should invade that kingdom.¹⁴⁵ Thus the Emperor had thrown his decision at last to the side of the general staff, and the most crucial diplomatic considerations went by the board. These movements could not be kept secret, but Franz Joseph hoped to check the evil consequences by announcing as a pretext the anti-Jewish riots in Bohemia,¹⁴⁶ and by forbidding the papers to print news of troop movements.¹⁴⁷ Nevertheless, these innocent measures of legitimate self-defense gave Bismarck a powerful argument, the "priority of Austrian armaments," with which to incriminate Franz Joseph in the eyes of the King. This was a battle-cry which Bismarck exploited, with only one set-back, until the first shot was fired in the war that he now desired above all else.

It is not strange that the Emperor decided as he did. Memories of Frederick the Great's attacks, combined with the expectation that Bismarck would soon explode his bomb of federal reform, made Franz Joseph "fidgety" (as Mensdorff expressed it).¹⁴⁸ Bismarck's ominous policy hung "like a

¹⁴² Werner to Mensdorff, March 10, No. 20.

¹⁴³ Minutes of conference of March 14 (Appendix A, No. 15 below).

¹⁴⁴ *Oesterreichs Kämpfe* I, pp. 75-77.

¹⁴⁵ Appendix A, No. 15.

¹⁴⁶ Bloomfield to Clarendon, March 22, No. 115 (F. O. 7 Austria 705).

¹⁴⁷ Appendix A, No. 15.

¹⁴⁸ Bloomfield to Clarendon, letter of March 29 (F. O. 356 Bloomfield Papers 39); Gramont (*Origines* VII, p. 419).

sword of Damocles over Austria's head."¹⁴⁹ On March 14, General Govone arrived in Berlin. On the fifteenth came the news of another Bismarckian *coup*: Manteuffel promulgated in Schleswig his long-desired stroke against the Augustenburgers, an ordinance punishing agitators with two to ten years' hard labor.¹⁵⁰ Gablenz telegraphed in despair that he could not suppress the inevitable polemics that would result from the measure, and they would be welcomed as ammunition by Bismarck.¹⁵¹ This single-handed Prussian action aroused resentment in Vienna to a terrific pitch.¹⁵² Here was an immediate danger of rupture, perhaps the *casus belli* in embryo.

Simultaneously arrived a despatch from Dresden which placed additional ammunition in the hands of Biegeleben. Beust insisted that Austria should not let another moment pass before making the declaration in Frankfurt "that Austria intends under all circumstances to hold fast to article 11 of the Federal Pact, and that she expects the same from all her confederates."¹⁵³ Now was the time for action, he said, before Prussia had begun to mobilize and intimidate her neighbors.¹⁵⁴

Out of this supercharged atmosphere sprang the hectic incident of the Karolyi interpellation. While the initial impulse toward decisive action probably came from Biegeleben, the questioning of Berlin bears all the earmarks of the Emperor's hand. Pressed by the zealous *Referent* to carry out

¹⁴⁹ Karolyi to Mensdorff, March 21, No. 23A.

¹⁵⁰ *Staatsarchiv* X, pp. 347-348.

¹⁵¹ Gablenz to Mensdorff, March 15, tg. 4:30 p. m.

¹⁵² Stern IX, p. 455, quoting Steiger's report.—Mensdorff, however, remarked coolly to Werther, that the ordinance indicated Prussia's agreement with the Austrian contention that each power could administer its own duchy entirely as it saw fit, without control by the other (Werther to Bismarck, March 19, 1866, No. 80, HAA).

¹⁵³ This was an action which Beust had repeatedly urged upon Mensdorff in the preceding fortnight (Werner to Mensdorff, March 4, No. 18A; March 7, No. 19). Article 11 gave a threatened state the right to demand from its confederates protection against attack by another.

¹⁵⁴ Werner to Mensdorff, March 14, No. 21A. There is no evidence for the story later reported by the Prussian envoy in Weimar, which Thimme prints (*G. W. V.*, p. 512 note 2).

the promise of the circular of March 12, and to appeal directly to the Diet, Franz Joseph's sense of honor bade him appeal first to Prussia. In haste, Mensdorff dashed off a telegram to Karolyi in his own hand. This message, which has not been given correctly in any account hitherto,¹⁵⁵ ran as follows:

"The rumors of Prussian preparations for war are gaining more consistency, especially the rehearsed mobilization in Berlin takes on an unfavorable significance. We can therefore no longer postpone a demand for the certain elucidation of Prussia's intentions. You will therefore at once interpellate the Herr Minister President as to whether Prussia harbors the object of tearing up the Gastein Convention with forcible hands. Point out that only a completely precise and unambiguous answer can reassure us.

See that His Majesty the King is informed of your step, the basis of which is the urgent desire to try to uphold the peace in Germany.

Report by telegraph at the earliest possible moment,"¹⁵⁶

Soon after, without awaiting the result of this hasty *dé-marche*, the seven principal German courts were informed of it by telegraph.¹⁵⁷ If no "satisfactory answer" were received from Berlin, the *Ballplatz* announced its intention to turn to the Diet, place the Duchies question in the hands of the latter, and appeal against Prussia under articles 11 and 19. Thus, the interpellation was widely announced even before Karolyi had made it!

A circular despatch of same date soon apprised the courts more fully of Austria's intentions: in case of pressing danger of a rupture, Austria would propose the mobilization of the four non-Prussian federal corps and their union with the Aus-

¹⁵⁵ The phrasing in Sybel IV, p. 225, Friedjung I, p. 177, and Stern IX, p. 255, is taken from Biegeleben's circular to the German states, March 16, not from Mensdorff's telegram to Karolyi, which even Stern seems not to have seen (he does not cite it among references on p. 456, note 1).

¹⁵⁶ Mensdorff to Karolyi, March 16, tg. sent 12:20 p. m. (draft, in Mensdorff's hand). A further paragraph, crossed out before sending, ran thus: "You may add that we do not intend to give any provocation by this question, but only wish to obtain full clarity upon the intentions of the royal Prussian cabinet, which we hope have been misconstrued."

¹⁵⁷ Mensdorff to Munich, Dresden, Hanover, Stuttgart, Karlsruhe, Cassel, and Darmstadt, March 16, tg. sent 12:45 p. m. (draft in Biegeleben's hand).

trian army.¹⁵⁸ Thus Biegeleben unburdened his soul of instructions long kept in reserve. But Mensdorff forced him to insert at the end an extremely pacific passage, expressing hope that Austrian fears of "Bismarck's adventurous policy" were unfounded. Incidentally this was the first direct attack upon the Prussian prime minister by the Austrian government.

Meanwhile, *Hofburg* and *Ballplatz* waited breathlessly. Not until eleven o'clock in the evening was the tension somewhat relieved. Karolyi had executed his strange commission to the best of his ability. The sudden questioning had caught Bismarck unawares. He did not want to precipitate the contest just at this moment, yet he wished to keep the situation tense. Thinking best not to refuse a reply, he answered Austria's question with a laconic "No." But unable to repress a cynical smile, he added, "If a power intended the next morning to march across its frontiers, it would also reply with a 'no' the evening before." Although the envoy considered this answer of little value, yet, unaware of the plan of his government to switch to the Diet at once, and thinking that Count Mensdorff wanted to register a pacific statement from Bismarck for future reference, he confirmed the fact that the minister had given a *precise* answer to the interpellation.¹⁵⁹

The next day, Bismarck saw his mistake in his side remark, and hastened to correct it. "In contrast to his yesterday's . . . remark about a . . . crossing of the frontier, [Bismarck

¹⁵⁸ Mensdorff to Munich, Dresden, Karlsruhe, and Darmstadt (incompletely printed in *Oesterreichs Kämpfe* I, p. 20 note 1; *Staatsarchiv* XII, No. 2445; Hahn I, pp. 372-373. The omitted portions dealt with the Bavarian circular of March 8). Thimme seems to be unaware that the Austrian circular appeared in print (cf. his remark in *G. W. V.*, p. 422 note 2).—A second circular, sent to Hanover, Cassel, Hamburg, and Frankfurt, enclosed the previous circular of March 12, and included the latter portions of the above circular of March 16. All these courts were now completely informed of Austria's project. (Hassell: *Geschichte des Königreichs Hannover* II-2, p. 284, gives the wrong date for this circular).

¹⁵⁹ Karolyi to Mensdorff, March 16, tg. No. 18, sent 9:30 p. m., received 11:00 p. m.

now declared] that in such a case he would give an evasive reply, or none at all." He now amplified his "no," denied any warlike purpose behind the trial mobilization ("it was called by Prince Friedrich Carl, without his knowledge, for purely technical reasons"), Prussia had given no cause for fear while Austria was beginning to arm already. Karolyi, foreseeing a polemic, closed the interview with an expression of regret that he could not report any remarks which would give greater moral confidence in Vienna.¹⁶⁰

If the *Ballplatz* desired a good pretext to hail Prussia to Frankfurt, they failed to obtain it. As Beust said, the wrong question was asked, in the wrong way.¹⁶¹ If they desired to secure a peaceful declaration which they could later hold up before William if Bismarck ran amuck, again they failed to obtain it. The Emperor's and Mensdorff's instinct of honor had led them to make the move without visualizing clearly enough its outcome.

A greater mistake was the broadcasting of the news to the other states before its success was assured.¹⁶² The negative results disappointed the more zealous states, and the act itself had frightened the more timorous, like Bavaria and Hanover. Thus the *Ballplatz* laid bare its maladroitness, and weakened the respect of its friends. The only thing that can be said for it is that it provided a strong rejoinder against the Prussian stroke in the Duchies (the ordinance of March 11); and Bismarck's reply gave another proof of the untrustworthiness of Prussian peace assertions. Mensdorff treasured Bismarck's cynical commentary for later exploitation.¹⁶³

¹⁶⁰ Karolyi to Mensdorff, March 17, tg. No. 19, sent 4:20 p. m. This change is not noted in any account. (See Bismarck's own account of the two interviews in *G. W. V.*, pp. 410-411).

¹⁶¹ Werner to Mensdorff, March 19, No. 24A. Beust regretted that "so important and well-conceived" a plan should have failed, because one can't catch a man like Bismarck by a telegraphic and oral question. (Cf. *Friesen II*, p. 133).

¹⁶² Sybel's opinion of this (IV p. 225) is more correct than Friedjung's (I p. 178).

¹⁶³ Austrian note of April 8 to Berlin (*Staatsarchiv X*, p. 363). Franz Joseph wrote to Alexander (letter of April 7): "Espérant qu'une explication

If the interpellation itself was a piece of bad luck for Mensdorff, its failure was a fortunate thing. To place the Duchies question in the hands of the Diet would have been considered an act of war in Berlin. Prussia's armies could be in the field long before the Austrians and Germans were ready. Count Mensdorff can hardly have desired such a result, and it was probably due to him that Bismarck's ambiguous remarks were interpreted in a peaceful sense, and the trip to Frankfurt abandoned.

On March 18, Mensdorff telegraphed the secondary states that Prussia had denied aggressive intentions, and that Austria would therefore not make the proposed declaration.¹⁶⁴ He did *not* recall his previous circular, nor did the majority of states warn Austria against a provocative step, as Sybel would have us believe.¹⁶⁵ On the contrary, they sent their warnings to Berlin not long afterward.

THE PEACE OFFENSIVE

Determined to preserve whatever was good in the interpellation idea, Count Mensdorff set about more carefully to force Bismarck to make some definite declaration of intentions relative to his federal obligations. The Austrian minister told his envoys to hint that a motion in the Diet, perhaps

franche et loyale pourrait améliorer la situation, j'ai chargé mon envoyé à Berlin de demander à Monsieur de Bismarck si le Gouvernement prussien comptait s'affranchir violemment des engagements contractés. Toute en niant cette intention, la réponse de ce Ministre était emprunte d'une ironie si blessant et accompagnée de commentaires si peu rassurans qu'elle n'a pu qu'augmenter mes premières appréhensions."

¹⁶⁴ Circular tg. March 18, to Munich, Dresden, Hanover, Stuttgart, Karlsruhe, Cassel, and Darmstadt.

¹⁶⁵ Sybel IV, p. 226. It is difficult to find out where Sybel got this false information, unless from Baden. Kübeck learned that some of the ministers, as well as the Grand Duchess of Baden and Prince William, were betraying Austrian secrets to Prussia. He therefore warned Zulauf, the Austrian chargé, not to let documents out of his hand (Kübeck to Mensdorff, letter of March 16). Possibly Zulauf recalled the circular tg. of March 16, and the Prussian envoy reported this fact. Sybel's incorrect statement has been followed by (among others) K. Lange: *Bismarck und die norddeutschen Kleinstaaten im Jahre 1866* p. 6, but not by Stern and Friedjung.

by Bavaria and Saxony, to preserve the peace under article 11, was now in place.¹⁶⁹

For the next ten days, Mensdorff worked hard to induce Pfordten to take the initiative, and he tried to interest the other loyal states in the project, and keep their courage up. He argued in this way:

An interpellation of Prussia in the Diet would accomplish a double purpose: it would make a subsequent rupture more difficult, and it would reassert the position of the Diet in preventing hostilities. Prussia would be forced to make a declaration denying aggressive intentions.

Such a public manifestation would make a great impression upon Europe, for it would concentrate the entire influence of the *Bund* against the aggressor.

To make the proposal more palatable to Pfordten, Mensdorff promised that if Prussia took offense, and made war, Austria would not make peace, except in understanding with Bavaria. Blome was asked to present this note to Pfordten to be shown directly to King Ludwig.¹⁶⁷

The Bavarian minister, however, was not inclined to bite at Mensdorff's bait,¹⁶⁸ since he had too close connections with the *Wilhelmstrasse* to join a manoeuvre against Prussia. Moreover, he was actively engaged upon his own non-partisan war-prevention schemes. Having failed to induce Bismarck to open negotiations with Austria for the proposed federal reform,¹⁶⁹ and having equally failed to induce Mensdorff to reopen the Duchies question officially with Prussia, Pfordten resolved to take the bit between his own teeth. On March 26, he had surprised Blome with a suggestion that he was ready to mediate between the powers on the following basis:

Prussia to accept Augustenburg and a modification of the February demands, Austria to allow a new allotment of voting power in the Diet more in accord with Prussia's actual strength, and to permit Prussia to exercise a preponderant influence in North Germany.¹⁷⁰

¹⁶⁹ Circular tg. March 18, to seven *Mittelstaaten*.

¹⁶⁷ All this from Mensdorff to Blome, March 24.

¹⁶⁸ Blome to Mensdorff, March 26, No. 25A. He promised to submit the proposal to the council and reply later. (Blome to Mensdorff, March 28, No. 26A).

¹⁶⁹ Reuss to Bismarck, March 20, No. 26; March 26, No. 29 *Vertraulich* (HAA).

¹⁷⁰ Blome to Mensdorff, March 26, No. 25B *Vertraulich*.

These statesmanlike but tardy suggestions were unfortunately never considered seriously by either German power. Thinking best to humor Pfordten under the circumstances, however, Mensdorff expressed an interest in the proposals, and asked for more details.¹⁷¹ Meanwhile, Pfordten had also offered his mediation to Prince Reuss, the Prussian envoy, without mentioning the February demands.¹⁷²

Heartened by Austrian encouragement, the Bavarian premier formulated his compromise plan in a note of March 31, which was presented to the chancelleries of Vienna and Berlin, thus formally offering mediation. To secure Austria's favor, he had cleverly incorporated into them the demand that both powers make a declaration of peaceful intentions.¹⁷³ But his demand came just four days too late to aid Count Mensdorff's peace efforts. On March 28, Prussia had ordered military preparations, which went far beyond those of Austria, and with a single stroke heightened the tension and the temperature in Germany. Bavaria and other states took fright and began military preparations in earnest.

The danger that Mensdorff had so clearly prophesied was now realized a fortnight after the prophecy. In the interim, the Count had made heroic efforts to ward off the inevitable. He had taken the friendly Baron Werther completely into his confidence. He had given up the transparent fiction that the purpose of the Austrian troop movements was to quell disorders in Bohemia,¹⁷⁴ and on the suggestion of Lord Bloomfield, he had accurately, if tardily, detailed to the Prussian ambassador the military orders that had been given.¹⁷⁵

¹⁷¹ Mensdorff to Blome, March 30.

¹⁷² Blome to Mensdorff, March 28, No. 26A; Reuss to Bismarck, March 27, No. 29 *Vertraulich* (HAA).

¹⁷³ Sybel IV, p. 237.

¹⁷⁴ Mensdorff to Karolyi, tg. March 28; memorandum of Thile on conversation with Karolyi, March 25 (HAA).

¹⁷⁵ Bloomfield to Clarendon, letter of March 29 (F. O. 356 Bloomfield Papers 39); Werther to Bismarck, March 27, tg. No. 88 (HAA). Bismarck sent a copy of this Werther tg. at once to Roon, with the notation, "Ich glaube nur nichts von dem was Mensdorff sagt!" He sent another copy,

Karolyi, too, followed the example of his chief. With all the earnestness he could command, he told Bismarck that Austria would *never* fire the first shot, and all Europe knew it. Bismarck coolly replied that the Austrian public would drive the Emperor to attack Prussia.¹⁷⁶

At the same time, Mensdorff had adopted another expedient which had been suggested by Karolyi, Kübeck, and Beust almost simultaneously: to interpellate Bismarck again, this time *in writing*, making so strong a statement of Austria's desire for peace that the Prussian minister-president would have difficulty in matching it.¹⁷⁷ At first skeptical of success, Mensdorff became more enamoured of the idea as Bismarck exploited more loudly the Austrian troop movements. A Bismarckian circular of March 24 to the German courts had pictured innocent Prussia about to be attacked by wolfish Austria, and had asked the states what they would do in case of war.¹⁷⁸ A number of ministers indignantly rejected the accusations; and practically all had stood firmly by article 11.¹⁷⁹ Pfordten finally concurred in Beust's suggestion that the two courts remind Bismarck of his federal obligations.¹⁸⁰ Thus the Prussian circular had proved a sort of boomerang against its own author.

Great was the necessity, however, of nipping in the bud the impression which Bismarck had sought to spread, that Austria's troop movements made her the aggressor. Moreover, the Prussian movements brought genuine alarm to Mensdorff, for, once the armament race was begun, what could stop it?

without remarks, to the King, who wrote on Bismarck's note of transmittal: "Unsere Projecte von heute scheinen *diesem* gegenüber sehr übertrieben. Dass Beurlaubten in Mähren wieder entlassen sind, meldet auch Thile, Winckler, u[nd] Feldmann. W 273.66." These exchanges are not printed in *G. W. V.*, nor in Kohl: *Anhang* I, nor anywhere else heretofore.

¹⁷⁶ Karolyi to Mensdorff, letter of March 17; memorandum of Thile, March 25 (HAA).

¹⁷⁷ Karolyi to Mensdorff, March 21, letter and despatch, No. 23A; Kübeck to Mensdorff, letter of March 21; Werner to Mensdorff, March 19, No. 24A.

¹⁷⁸ *G. W. V.*, pp. 416-419; *Staatsarchiv* X, p. 348 ff.

¹⁷⁹ *G. W. V.*, pp. 444-446.

¹⁸⁰ Blome to Mensdorff, March 26, No. 25A.

Franz Joseph himself now realized the wisdom of Mensdorff's first advice and was ready to back up his minister to the hilt.

To the diplomatic campaign of early March, there now succeeded a direct and vigorous peace offensive. Mensdorff's first line of attack was a smashing frontal charge: a public challenge to Prussia to show that her intentions were peaceful, and to explain her recent military measures. His second line of attack was a flanking movement: to utilize what diplomatic aid he could get from the neutral powers,—a continuation of earlier attempts. His third line of attack was a secret mining operation: to weaken Bismarck's position, and drive the Count from office. At the same time, on another sector of the front, he feigned retreat before the Prussian offensive for the reform of the Confederation and the calling of a German parliament.

All the while, Mensdorff had to defend his peaceful policy from snipers in his own ranks: the general staff, which was growing daily more restive; certain cabinet members, who were looking in vain for a solution of Austria's external and internal problems;¹⁸¹ the anti-Prussian counsellors in Mensdorff's own department;¹⁸² and some of the leading envoys, like Blome and Hübner, who glimpsed no better opportunity than the present to settle with Prussia and Italy at one stroke.¹⁸³ Yet Gablenz from Holstein, Karolyi from Berlin, and Count Moriz Esterhazy at his side, gave constant support to the beleaguered foreign minister, and encouraged him to resist the growing war spirit among officials and public in Austria.¹⁸⁴

The main lines of Mensdorff's frontal attack are well known, and need not be repeated in detail. Karolyi's note of

¹⁸¹ Count Belcredi in particular, later Larisch and others (Wertheimer, in *Preussische Jahrbücher* CLXXX, 1920, Heft 3, p. 337; council of May 1, 1866: Redlich II, p. 803; Sybel IV, p. 288).

¹⁸² Mensdorff to Brenner, letter of August 17, 1866 (Friedjung II, p. 646).

¹⁸³ Blome to Mensdorff, letter of February 25; Hübner to Mensdorff, letter of April 3.

¹⁸⁴ Gablenz to Mensdorff, letter of March 17; numerous letters from Karolyi in March and April (cf. Karolyi's letter of May 6).

March 31,¹⁸⁶ in reality an open letter to Bismarck, challenging him to equal Austria in declaring for peace, made the best impression all over Europe, and forced William, whose heart was still pacific, to hold his minister's pen in check.¹⁸⁶ The succession of notes that followed between Berlin and Vienna finally ended, against Bismarck's wishes, in the agreement of both powers to recall their military forces.¹⁸⁷

This notable check for the Prussian minister-president was not the complete defeat that Mensdorff had hoped for, but it was a fair compensation for his efforts. Once disarmed, Prussia could not so easily a second time arouse the war demon. Mensdorff's success, while due in large measure to Franz Joseph's offer of prior disarmament, was aided by the simultaneous mining operation, and the flank attack as well.

The mining operation is generally known as the "Coburg intrigue." The plan was to hold Bismarck personally responsible for misleading the King into a warlike policy against Austria, "which no true German desired, as it would simply play into the hands of France." The King was to be urged to drop Bismarck and appoint a more liberal minister. In essence, it was simply the culmination of the struggle which had been going on for years at the Prussian court, between the Crown Prince's faction and the Bismarck faction. Only the absence of the King from Berlin had saved Bismarck from it in July 1865. When Bismarck began again in February 1866 to press for war, the conflict with the "feminine influence" blazed out hotter than ever. On Bismarck's side were Roon, Moltke, the generals of the military cabinet, and that invaluable new recruit, Manteuffel.¹⁸⁸ Opposed to them were the Crown Prince and his zealous "Vicky," Queen Augusta, Dowager Queen Elizabeth (sister of Franz Joseph's mother),

¹⁸⁶ Printed in *Staatsarchiv* X, p. 352 ff. It was sketched in Mensdorff to Karolyi, March 29.

¹⁸⁷ Each succeeding note from Berlin was "filed down" by William before despatching to Vienna (*G. W. V.*, p. 452; *Stern* IX, p. 461).

¹⁸⁸ Austrian notes of April 7 and 18, Prussian notes of April 6, 15, and 21 (*Staatsarchiv* X, pp. 356-368).

¹⁸⁹ Cf. Schweinitz I, p. 204.

Baron Schleinitz and his former undersecretary Gruner, Count Goltz whose brother was an adjutant of the King, and others including the ambassador in London.¹⁸⁰

Duke Ernst of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha struck the spark which ignited the whole Coburg clique into action against Bismarck.¹⁸⁰ He sent his trusted secretary, Baron von Meyern, to Vienna on March 27, to urge the Emperor to write personally to King William, exposing freely and frankly his peaceful intentions, and the terrible consequences of a war.¹⁸¹ (Ernst sketched roughly the contents of this imperial letter). But since Franz Joseph feared to open himself to a flat refusal from Berlin, preferring to save such a direct appeal for the last resort,¹⁸² Count Mensdorff composed an extremely able and aptly worded letter, addressed to Ernst, but calculated for the eye of the King.¹⁸³ The point was directed sharply at Bismarck, without naming him, and at the "provocative" policy which he was trying to carry through against the better interests of the two powers and the wishes of the "overwhelming majority" of Germans. Ernst sent it on to Berlin with a further appeal of his own, while his wife wrote to urge the Queen

¹⁸⁰ Goltz to Bernstorff, letter of March 26, 1866 (Ringhoffer II, p. 239); Fritz Hartung: "Verantwortliche Regierung, Kabinette, und Nebenregierungen im konstitutionellen Preussen 1848-1918," in *Forschungen zur brandenburgischen und preussischen Geschichte* XLIV, 1931, p. 31.

¹⁸⁰ Roon's theory that the Crown Princess was the prime mover, with which Thimme agrees (*G. W. V.*, p. 439 note 2), is not corroborated by the evidence cited by Thimme, nor by any other evidence yet available.

¹⁸¹ Glaser. "Fürstliche Gegner Bismarcks im Kampfe um den Krieg 1866," in *Grenzboten* LXXII-2, 1913, pp. 16-18. Glaser's article is the only work which prints Ernst's letter to Mensdorff. It has not been used by Stern IX, 461, nor any other author before Lange (*Bismarck und die norddeutschen Kleinstaaten im Jahre 1866* p. 17).

¹⁸² Franz Joseph's words in council of April 17, in reply to a similar suggestion of Count Larisch (protocol). The Emperor's caution had led him to omit the usual birthday letter to King William, sending greetings only through Dowager Queen Elizabeth. This hurt the King's feelings (*Origines* VIII, p. 83), and was so utilized by Bismarck (Bismarck to Goltz, March 30, No. 135, PGS).

¹⁸³ Partially printed in Tempelvey pp. 26-30, partially in Mager pp. 34-36, completely in Glaser pp. 18-20, complete copy annexed to Bismarck's despatch to Redern, April 5, 1866, No. 70 (PGS).

of England to join the cause.¹⁹⁴ This letter followed on the heels of another, from the Queen of Prussia, "written in the greatest alarm" to Victoria,¹⁹⁵ and was followed by a third, from daughter "Vicky."¹⁹⁶ All the Austrian connections of the Berlin court were called into action. Mensdorff wrote to his sister-in-law, the Countess Hatzfeld-Dietrichstein.¹⁹⁷ William's sister, Alexandrina, set on by her son-in-law, Prince Windischgrätz, took her pen in hand.¹⁹⁸ The Archduchess Sophie found a willing agent of pressure in her sister, the Dowager Queen of Prussia. As a climax, there came a passionately frank letter from Queen Victoria, begging William not to take responsibility "for the faults and recklessness . . . of *one* man."¹⁹⁹ Victoria had entertained thoughts of more direct intervention by England in conjunction with France, but had been discouraged by Clarendon and Russell.²⁰⁰ The Queen and the other Coburgers had with them the good wishes of many another, like the Prussian ambassador in Paris, Count Goltz, who had hoped that Franz Joseph would write a letter to "break Bismarck's neck."²⁰¹ Mighty indeed were the forces set in motion against Bismarck's person and his policies.²⁰²

¹⁹⁴ *The Letters of Queen Victoria*, second series, I, p. 312.

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.* p. 308.

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid.* pp. 316-317.

¹⁹⁷ *Kaiser Friedrich III. Tagebücher von 1848-1866* p. 419.

¹⁹⁸ Letter to William, April 6 (*Kaiser Wilhelms I. Briefe an seine Schwester Alexandrine* p. 101).

¹⁹⁹ *The Letters of Queen Victoria*, second series, I, pp. 317-318: ". . . Pause before you permit so fearful an act as the commencement of a war, the responsibility of which will rest on *you alone*. . . ."

²⁰⁰ Sir H. Maxwell: *Life and Letters of the Earl of Clarendon* II, p. 311; Gooch: *The Later Correspondence of Lord John Russell* II, p. 345; *The Letters of Queen Victoria*, second series, I, pp. 314-316.

²⁰¹ Baron Beyens: *Le second Empire vue par un Diplomate belge* II, p. 91. Goltz himself contributed to the uneasiness of Bismarck by reporting the growing hostility of France to his policy (Goltz to William, April 3: *G. W. V.*, p. 440, introduction to No. 294; Goltz to Bismarck, March 29, No. 140: *HAA*). A different view is expressed by Dorn p. 204.

²⁰² For Bismarck's successful counter-moves, see *G. W. V.*, pp. 438-440; Tempelley pp. 32-36; Kohl: *Anhang I*, pp. 132-135.

Nor were these all. Pfordten's mediation just at this time also came to the aid of Mensdorff's campaign, for Bismarck forced himself for political reasons to show deference to the wishes of Bavaria. And Bismarck's armaments had driven the Bavarian minister to commence arming in his turn,—which made William pause.²⁰³ Moreover, Mensdorff's appeal of March 1 to the three neutral powers had borne some fruit. To be sure, Bismarck had parried Clarendon's offer of mediation,²⁰⁴ but the British ambassador in Berlin, and the foreign secretary in London did their best to impress King William with the danger of his minister's policy,²⁰⁵—as Mensdorff had requested. The *Quai d'Orsay*, rubbing its hands in secret over the prospects of a war, made no appreciable effort to stop Bismarck. But the Austrian appeal to Russia stirred the Tsar Alexander to action. He wrote to William, cautiously warning him not to set the German Confederation by the ears. William pointed to Austrian troop movements, and referred the Tsar to Vienna. On April 7, General Richter arrived with an imperial Russian letter for Franz Joseph, just in time to be utilized as another agent for Mensdorff's peace activities. Franz Joseph wrote a detailed exposé of all his defensive military measures,—not an imposing list,—and in a convincing heart-outpouring referred Alexander back to Berlin, sadder

²⁰³ *Anhang I*, p. 127; *Moltke's Militärische Werke I*, part II, p. 77 (marginal note of William).

²⁰⁴ Initiated by Clarendon in a private letter to Lord Loftus, March 7; accepted by the King, but parried by Bismarck, in letter to Bernstorff, March 20. The entire incident may be followed in *The Diplomatic Reminiscences of Lord Augustus Loftus*, second series, I, pp. 43-48; *The Letters of Queen Victoria*, second series, I, pp. 305, 307, 311; *Kaiser Friedrich III. Tagebücher von 1848-1866* pp. 413, 544-545; *G. W. V.*, pp. 407-410; H. O. Meisner: "England, Frankreich, und die deutsche Einigung," in *Preussische Jahrbücher* CCXI, 1928, pp. 75-77. Sybel incorrectly states (IV, p. 240) that Clarendon offered mediation in Vienna also. Thimme's brief summary (*G. W. V.*, p. 407) suffers from lack of acquaintance with Loftus' well-known *Reminiscences*.

²⁰⁵ Loftus to Clarendon, March 17, Most Confidential (F. O. 64 Prussia 591); Loftus: *Reminiscences I*, pp. 46-48; *Victoria's Letters I*, pp. 307-308, 316.

but wiser.²⁰⁶ At the same time, Bismarck's proposal of a federal parliament elected by universal suffrage (April 9) really came to Mensdorff's aid, for it aroused Alexander's suspicions further, and it split the conservatives in Prussia.

All these manifold influences, personal and political, concentrating against Bismarck's policy in the early part of April,—most of them started and encouraged by Vienna,—aided at the crucial moment by the illness of the Prussian prime minister,²⁰⁷—threatened the defeat of Bismarck's tactics, if not his actual dismissal. When William accepted Franz Joseph's proposal of mutual disarmament, it seemed as though the war-mongers had received a death blow.

Then happened another of those sudden, unpremeditated, insufficiently pondered actions of the Vienna cabinet, which lost the game for Mensdorff and won it for Bismarck. Mensdorff's peace offensive had not been aided by the fiasco of the Karolyi interpellation; it had been seriously endangered by the decision of the military council to begin troop movements; but now, just as it seemed to have overcome those handicaps, the heroic campaign of the foreign minister and Franz Joseph collapsed, as the Emperor gave the order to mobilize against Italy.

MENSITORFF LOSES THE BATTLE

Ever since King William on March 28 had given instructions to arm the Prussian border fortresses, begin the purchase of horses, and increase the army by seventy-five battalions, Prussia had had a considerable military advantage over Austria.²⁰⁸ The imperial war minister and staff urged

²⁰⁶ Franz Joseph to Alexander II, letter of April 7 (draft in HHS). That this letter had the desired effect upon the Tsar is attested by Schweinitz, special military attaché in St. Petersburg (*Denkwürdigkeiten des Botschafters General von Schweinitz* I, p. 207).

²⁰⁷ Cf. La Marmora p. 158.

²⁰⁸ See Friedjung I, pp. 217-223, for a refutation of Sybel's account, and the best analysis of the relative armaments of both powers and Italy. Cf. *Origines* VIII, pp. 103-104 (the Italian army began to be increased on March 28); Brandenburg II, p. 146.

the Emperor with increasing vehemence to put the entire army on a war footing.²⁰⁹ But Count Mensdorff "preferred to put Prussia in the wrong and not give her what she was striving to receive, the first blow."²¹⁰ Thus Franz Joseph and his chief advisor, Count Esterhazy, recognizing the mistake of March 14, had subsequently proved to be Mensdorff's staunchest supporters against the military men.²¹¹ Karolyi aided their efforts by constant encouragement, and it was he who suggested that Austria should offer to take the initiative in disarmament.²¹² Mensdorff instructed him to propose the simultaneous withdrawal of troops by both powers,²¹³ but in an official note a few days later, he offered to begin the action on April 25, a day ahead of Prussia.²¹⁴ Franz Joseph even wanted to suspend all military operations at once without waiting for Prussia's reply, but his "military *entourage*" prevented him.²¹⁵ But he was so scrupulous in avoiding any act which might give Bismarck a weapon in hand, that he postponed the building of fortifications at the bridge-head in Theresienstadt until the air was cleared.²¹⁶ Seemingly, Austria's patently pacific attitude, and her offer to begin disarming a day before Prussia, would strike the final blow to Bismarck's war policy. Austria awaited his reply.

On April 20 came the heaviest attack from the general staff that Mensdorff had had to meet. The chief of staff,

²⁰⁹ Gramont, April 8 (*Origines* VIII, p. 199); Werther to Bismarck, April 9, tg. No. 103 (AGEV).

²¹⁰ Remarks to Motley, United States minister (Motley to Seward, April 10, 1866, No. 160 Confidential. Department of State, Washington, D. C.).

²¹¹ For Franz Joseph: Werther to Bismarck, April 9, tg. No. 103 (AGEV); Bloomfield to Clarendon, April 18, No. 183 Confidential (F. O. 7 Austria 706). For Esterhazy's support: protocols of councils of April 8 and 17 (HHS).

²¹² Karolyi to Mensdorff, letters of April 6 and 14; tg. No. 38 April 16.

²¹³ Mensdorff to Karolyi, tg. April 13; Werther to Bismarck, April 19, No. 113 (HAA).

²¹⁴ Mensdorff to Karolyi, April 18 (*Staatsarchiv* X, p. 366).

²¹⁵ Bloomfield to Clarendon, April 18, No. 183 Confidential (F. O. 7 Austria 706). Cf. Gramont to Benedetti, April 18, tg. (*Origines* VIII, p. 283).

²¹⁶ Protocol of council of April 8 (Appendix A, No. 16 below).

Baron Henikstein, presented a memorandum to the Emperor urging him to put the entire army on a war footing. In addition to the four weeks' advantage that the Prussian army had over the Austrian, he cited the fact that Italy was beginning to arm on a large scale. With all the earnestness at his command, he pressed for the mobilization of the army in the north and the south.²¹⁷

Franz Joseph gave the memorandum to Mensdorff, who replied at once:

"I am too much of a soldier not to appreciate thoroughly the military correctness of this memorandum. . . . On the whole, the direction taken by the imperial cabinet has an element of hazard in it,— but the situation created by a mobilization of our troops would also not be without danger. Everything that has happened up to now was directed toward the object of robbing Prussia and Bismarck of any chance for aggression. If we succeed in this, we shall have gained a more advantageous position, not only financially, but also politically. At any rate, it seems to me, the impression of our last note in Berlin must be awaited. . . ." ²¹⁸

Would the Emperor give up the fight for peace at this critical moment?

The tenseness of the situation exerted a strain on the nerves of all. The minister of war and Count Belcredi frankly did not believe that Bismarck could be caught by diplomatic notes. They suspected that he was already protected by treaties with Italy, France, and some of the German states.²¹⁹ He seemed to be invincible indeed. By contrast, Mensdorff's diplomacy inspired little confidence among his colleagues.²²⁰ Influential organs of the press were calling loudly for war, and the younger officers were as eager as the fire-eaters of the *Ballplatz* and of the Vienna streets, to thrash the Prussians and the Italians once for all.²²¹ The agony of decision

²¹⁷ This memorandum, printed in an inaccessible periodical, is summarized by Friedjung I, p. 222.

²¹⁸ Autograph memorandum of Mensdorff, Vienna, April 20 (*Kriegsarchiv: Militärkanzlei*; printed in *Oesterreichs Kämpfe* I, pp. 73-74, almost in *extenso*).

²¹⁹ Protocol of council of April 17 (HHS; partially printed by Redlich II, pp. 771-773).

²²⁰ *Ibid.*, and Belcredi's "Fragmente," in *Die Kultur*, 1906, pp. 5, 12, 16.

²²¹ Friedjung I, pp. 160, 164, 217, 282.

was too much for the frail Count Esterhazy, and he went to bed with a fever.²²² Mensdorff was already confined to his room by an accident to his limb.²²³ A worse misfortune was in store for them.

While Mensdorff was penning his firm advice to the Emperor, a telegram from the director of police in Venice was laid on Belcredi's desk.²²⁴ It was short, and contained little information not already known by the intelligence service of the army: a concentration of 40,000 men was beginning near Bologna; an Italian general was buying and seizing all available horses.²²⁵ But Belcredi saw in it the possibility of getting action at last. In the supercharged atmosphere the importance of this additional information was greatly magnified. He hurried with it to the Emperor. Franz Joseph, alarmed, ordered Crenneville to telegraph to the commanding general in Verona for a verification of the report.²²⁶ While awaiting a reply, he called a council for the following day.²²⁷ He consulted Crenneville, Franck, Henikstein, and possibly Arch-

²²² See his letters to Count Mensdorff, April 23, 25, 26 (HHS: *Nachlass Rechberg*; printed by Redlich II, pp. 773-775), from which it is evident that he was actually ill, not tactically ill, as Rechberg told Friedjung (*Kampf* I, p. 226; II, p. 589).

²²³ Bloomfield to Clarendon, letter of April 19 (F. O. 356 Bloomfield Papers 39); *Neue Freie Presse*, April 20, No. 588, *Beilage*.

²²⁴ Count Belcredi was minister of police as well as *Staatsminister*.

²²⁵ "Kommissär in S. M. Madalena telegrafirt soeben: zwischen Bologna und Paggio-Renatico werden 40000 Mann concentrirt; gestern bereits die ersten Eskadronen angekommen, gestern in Ponte lago scuro ein piemontesischer General für Regg alle aufzutreibenden Pferde teils gekauft, teils beschlag belegt." (Tg. No. 2637, Venice, April 20, 1866: copy in HHS, P. A. III. 92: hour of sending and receipt not indicated). On the back of another copy of this telegram (*Kriegsarchiv: MKSM*), Franz Joseph has written in pencil, "An Armee Commando zu telegraphiren, ob sich diese Meldungen bestätigen. FJ."

²²⁶ Crenneville to Armee Commando, Verona, tg. No. 1654, Vienna, April 20, sent at 10 p. m. (*Kriegsarchiv: MKSM*). On the margin in pencil is written, "Videat Seine Excellenz Herr Kriegs Minister."—Franz Joseph called the news "alarming" in council the next day (Redlich II, p. 795).

²²⁷ Protocol of the council of April 21 (Appendix A, No. 17).

duke Albrecht.²²⁸ The chief of staff, compelled to alter his schedule for general mobilization, drafted plans for a mobilization against Italy only. Half a loaf was better than no bread.

Meanwhile, a second telegram had contributed its share to the excitement.²²⁹ Tucking them both into his portfolio, the zealous *Staatsminister* went to see Mensdorff, who was nursing his injured foot. But the latter statesman refused to acquiesce in the proposal to call more men to arms in Venetia. He did, however, give his grudging consent to summon the border regiments.²³⁰ Nevertheless, Mensdorff was not yet ready to relinquish his hard-won pacifist policy. As soon as his colleague had left, he dashed off telegraphic instructions to Karolyi in Berlin, to collect all available information as to the attitude toward the latest Austrian note on disarmament, and to wire a reply before night.²³¹ Doubtless, he still hoped that if Prussia agreed to disarm, he might stay the Emperor's hand.

On this question of life or death for Austria, was Esterhazy's opinion asked? There is no reliable source to tell us.²³² From subsequent letters to Mensdorff the Count ap-

²²⁸ On Crenneville's attitude in general, see E. von Wertheimer: *Graf Julius Andrássy* I, p. 213. Franck's advice may be gleaned from his remarks in council of April 22 (Redlich II, p. 797). For Henikstein's new plans, see protocol of council of April 21, Appendix A, No. 17 (insufficient in Redlich II, p. 796). For Archduke Albrecht at this point there is no source, but his influence was very strong in all matters of military policy at this time (Friedjung I, pp. 171-172) and all important military information was shown to him, e. g. Belcredi's telegrams.

²²⁹ "Die Trains von und nach Bologna mit Ausnahme eines Schnelltrains im Tage, allein für die piemontesischen Truppen reserviert." (tg. ad No. 2637/p.r., Venice, April 20, received 9.15 p. m. in Vienna: copy in *Kriegsarchiv: MKSM*). On the back in pencil, Franz Joseph wrote, "Nach Verona telegraphiren, ob diese Meldung wahr. Noch heute soll von Verona jedenfalls telegraphiert werden, was dort über die Situation bekannt ist. FJ."

²³⁰ Protocol of council of April 21 (Appendix A, No. 17). Cf. also Mensdorff's words in council of April 23 (Redlich II, p. 798).

²³¹ Mensdorff to Karolyi, April 21, tg. sent 10 a. m.

²³² Rechberg's story (Friedjung I, p. 226; II, p. 589) is not to be trusted, for three reasons. 1, Rechberg was embittered against Esterhazy; 2, most of

pears to have been left entirely without information except through Mensdorff himself.²³³ There is no direct evidence that Franz Joseph or Belcredi consulted him at all.²³⁴ If this be true, then he exerted no influence on the fateful decision.²³⁵

Without the two peace ministers, the result of the council on April 21 was a foregone conclusion. Why it was convened at all is a mystery, unless to leave a record for history. Franz Joseph in his opening statement announced his decision to take "further military measures" if the "alarming news" were verified by General Benedek in Verona.²³⁶ He placed no question before the ministers for discussion. The minister of war outlined five "necessary military measures" for Venetia, and asked for appropriations. Count Larisch promised to do his best to secure sufficient funds. The Hungarian chancellor, usually the echo of Esterhazy, uttered not a word. Just before closing, almost as an afterthought, Franz Joseph perfunctorily inquired "whether . . . Count Mensdorff had raised objections to the proposed military measures." Belcredi's reply mattered little, for Mensdorff's opinion was now discounted. The *Staatsminister* himself approved without re-

the story does not correspond to the facts that can be checked; 3, it was told from memory twenty-four years after the event, in which Rechberg did not personally participate.

²³³ On April 23 he was still uninformed whether mobilization orders had been issued or not, two days after the decision (Esterhazy's first letter to Mensdorff, April 23). Or did he date this first letter incorrectly for April 22?

²³⁴ The *indirect* evidence in the protocol of the council of April 21 points both ways. The total lack of any reference to Esterhazy's opinion (whereas Franz Joseph asked Belcredi for Mensdorff's) might indicate 1, that the Emperor had received Esterhazy's assent and therefore did not need to inquire about it, or 2, that Belcredi had not sought Esterhazy's opinion else he would have cited it in support of mobilization against Italy (which Esterhazy approved later).

²³⁵ This is also the opinion of Redlich (II, p. 775) and, following him, of K. Tschuppik: *The Reign of the Emperor Francis Joseph 1848-1916* pp. 136-138.

²³⁶ Protocol of council of April 21 (Appendix A, No. 17). Those present, besides the Emperor, were Belcredi, Larisch, Franck, and Majlath. The council must have concluded before 11.35 a. m. when the confirmatory tg. arrived from Verona.

serve.²³⁷ The Emperor closed the conference with the warning that if the news was confirmed, the navy should also be put in fighting shape.²³⁸ No vote was taken, no hostile opinion was expressed. Beyond a doubt, the real decision had been made the previous evening by the sovereign himself, with the advice of Belcredi, Franck, and Crenneville, probably also of Henikstein and the Archduke Albrecht.²³⁹ The "military camarilla" and the increasingly influential *Staatsminister* must therefore bear their meed of blame.

Though Esterhazy seems to have taken no part in this epochal decision, it is difficult to absolve so important an adviser of the Emperor from any share in the responsibility. Friedjung points an accusing finger at him because he did not continue to support Mensdorff at this juncture.²⁴⁰ That his influence was still at its height since the failure of the negotiations with Hungary, may well be questioned, however.²⁴¹ Even had he thrown his whole weight earnestly and uncompromisingly against new armaments at this moment, he could hardly have made an impression upon Franz Joseph. This he did not do. Sick as he may have been, he knew full well the dangers of precipitate action. It was his duty to keep in touch with events. He was given a chance to register his disapproval of increased armaments, when Mensdorff notified him of the results of the council.²⁴² But he withheld a reply for more than twenty-

²³⁷ This may be seen from his remarks in the council of the following day, April 22 (Redlich II, p. 797).

²³⁸ Protocol of council of April 21 (Appendix A, No. 17).

²³⁹ Cf. Redlich II, p. 797.

²⁴⁰ Friedjung I, p. 231.

²⁴¹ The cabinet crisis of February, a struggle for power between Belcredi and Esterhazy, seems to have resulted in inclining the Emperor toward the more intransigent policy of the former (Hugo Traub: "Aus dem Leben und Wirken des Grafen Richard Belcredi," in *Oesterreich, Zeitschrift für Geschichte*, I Jahrgang, Heft 4, July 1918, p. 295 note 4). A somewhat different conclusion is expressed by Wertheimer: *Andrassy* I, p. 200, and by Redlich: *Reichsproblem* II, p. 463.

²⁴² Mensdorff's note is not available, but it is indicated by Esterhazy's reply (first letter of April 23). Mensdorff seems to have written as soon as he heard the council's results, in any case before 3.40 p. m., at which time he already knew of Benedek's confirmation (cf. Mensdorff to Karolyi, April 21, tg. sent 3.40 p. m.). Esterhazy did not hear of the confirmation till April 23.

four hours, perhaps until he knew that his words could no longer influence the decision,²⁴³ perhaps because he was too ill.

At any rate, when Esterhazy did reply, his vote, for once, was unequivocal: "If Feldzeugmeister Benedek confirms the unfortunate reports of our agents, then indeed there is no other alternative but to give them *official* approval, and act accordingly."²⁴⁴ His further remark illustrates both his diletantism in diplomacy and his paternal attitude toward Mensdorff:

"At the sick-bed of so interesting a patient as Austria, the individual's feeling, the subjective conviction of a single doctor, is silenced by the declaration of the conference as a whole, which customarily places *les règles de l'art* above life or death."²⁴⁵

Shortly after the council adjourned, the confirmatory telegram from Benedek reached the Hofburg.²⁴⁶ At once the orders went out to mobilize the army corps destined for Italy.²⁴⁷ Before the sun had set, many soldiers in all parts of the monarchy were preparing for the trip to the southern front.

"The Austrians are driven wild by the danger of their position," wrote Lord Bloomfield at this time.²⁴⁸ The Italian war preparations looked like a counter-stroke of the wizard in Berlin to ruin the disarmament scheme.²⁴⁹ So thought the Vienna public, so judged Lord Clarendon, so remarked Tsar

²⁴³ Esterhazy to Mensdorff, first letter of April 23 (would better be dated April 22): Redlich II, p. 773.

²⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁴⁶ Benedek to Crenneville, April 21, tg. received 11.35 a. m. (*Kriegsarchiv: Militärkanzlei*).

²⁴⁷ They must have been begun before 3 40 p. m. when Mensdorff telegraphed Karolyi that the orders had been given.

²⁴⁸ Bloomfield to Clarendon, letter of April 26 (F. O. 356 Bloomfield Papers 39).

²⁴⁹ See Franz Joseph's remark in council of April 21 (Redlich II, p. 796) and Mensdorff's in council of April 23 (*Ibid.* p. 799).

Alexander, and many another.²⁵⁰ The Austrians felt the hand of Fate closing upon them just as they were about to escape.²⁵¹ Bismarck seemed unconquerable indeed. How ironical the destiny that had sent to the sick-bed in Vienna those ministers who stood for peace with Prussia, while at that very moment their *bête noir* in Berlin lay ill from the supposed defeat of his policy of war with Austria!

King William had received with satisfaction Austria's offer of prior disarmament, and a favorable reply was being drafted. Karolyi hastened to telegraph this good news to Vienna, where it arrived only a few hours after the mobilization orders had been sent.²⁵² Franz Joseph who was usually "one post-day too late," had the misfortune at this critical juncture to be several hours too early. The largest item of news in Belcredi's telegrams was later found to be false.²⁵³ To be sure, Italy was in reality collecting large forces, and troops were being directed from the south toward the Austrian frontier.²⁵⁴ Yet forty-eight hours' delay would have made little difference in defense, for Italy was determined not to strike first. That Mensdorff himself, seeing the defeat of his policy, did not force the Emperor to accept his resignation, he later considered to be the second great mistake of his career.²⁵⁵ It must be admitted, however, that his retention partly served to mask Austria's change of policy.

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²⁵⁰ Vienna public (Motley to Seward, April 25, No. 166: Department of State, Washington, D. C.); Clarendon (*The Letters of Queen Victoria*, second series, I, p. 322; Apponyi to Mensdorff, letter of April 30); Tsar Alexander said bluntly to the Prussian attaché, "Bismarck has provoked the new complications." (Schweinitz I, p. 214); Karolyi himself thought the same (to Mensdorff, April 30, No. 33).

²⁵¹ Esterhazy to Mensdorff, letter of April 26 (Redlich II, p. 775): "Es ist gar peinlich, sich durch die Scheingewalt der Verhältnisse majorisiert zu sehen!"

²⁵² Karolyi to Mensdorff, April 21, tg. No. 44, received 6 p. m.

²⁵³ So Mensdorff told Lord Bloomfield (Bloomfield to Clarendon, May 10, No. 239. F. O. 7 Austria 706).

²⁵⁴ Friedjung I, pp. 218-221. See also *The Times*, April 27, No. 25483, dispatch from Florence April 22.

²⁵⁵ Memorandum of September 21, 1866 (*Preussische Jahrbücher* CLXXX, 1920, p. 336).

The question before the Austrian ministers now was whether to precede or follow Prussia in arming further. On the one hand, Austria might be accused of precipitating the war; on the other, she would lose several days' priority in armaments, and every day was precious. The discussions in the minister-councils of April 22, 23, and 25, have little importance for the war question, except as they disclose the *arrière-pensées* of the individual ministers toward the war.²⁵⁶ All knew in their hearts that Bismarck would pounce upon the Austrian armaments in Italy to wreck the disarmament project. They could only *hope* he would not. But, in fact, military considerations proved now all-powerful with the Emperor. As Mensdorff had predicted late in March, Franz Joseph would delay arming till the last minute, and then would "go the whole hog."²⁵⁷ The curtain rose on the last act. On April 27, Franz Joseph signed the order for the mobilization against Prussia, too.

If everything went according to schedule (though the schedule was not aided by the earlier troop movements), the southern army would be in position by the 12th of June, the northern army a week later.²⁵⁸ The Austrians were now protected against an unexpected attack by Prussia. King William had explicitly stated that Gablenz need fear no *coup de main* in Holstein. "We shall not make war like robbers, but like gentlemen," he had said to Prince Solms.²⁵⁹ But if the King saw fit to mobilize at once, the Prussian army would have at least a fortnight's advantage. The outbreak of hostilities could be expected shortly after the first of June. Unlike the practice of the twentieth century, or even that of 1870, mobilization did not mean immediate war. In this year

²⁵⁶ Wertheimer, in *Preussische Jahrbücher* CLXXX, 1920, pp. 324-326, overestimates their importance. Stern lumps the council of April 21 with the others indiscriminately (IX pp. 462-463). Friedjung knew little. Protocols printed by Redlich II, pp. 795-802, in fairly complete form.

²⁵⁷ Bloomfield to Clarendon, letter of March 29 (F. O. 356 Bloomfield Papers 39).

²⁵⁸ *Oesterreichs Kämpfe* I, p. 79 ff.

²⁵⁹ Karolyi to Mensdorff, March 27, tg. No. 22.

of 1866, two of the three powers under arms were determined not to fire the first shot, and the third would do so only in the last extremity. There were still those who believed it would *not* come to this last extremity.

Mensdorff's immediate task was to check if possible the odium of appearing to assume the offensive. He published information on Italian armaments, with excerpts from Italian papers to prove them.²⁶⁰ When England and France forwarded to Vienna La Marmora's protests of injured innocence, he repeated in the most formal manner that Austria had no thought of attacking anyone, not even Italy. "We shall gladly refrain from the expenses [of increasing the army in Venetia], if one other great power is willing to guarantee that we shall not be attacked, and will assure us of cooperation in the case of aggression."²⁶¹ Clarendon and Napoleon naturally made their excuses.²⁶² The former berated the Italians and used only *douce violence* to Austria.²⁶³ Even the arming against Prussia lost Austria little support among the neutrals. Public opinion in the German states was angriest of all, but Austria counteracted it by playing, or promising to play, her last card. Now that Franz Joseph had burned his bridges behind him, the last part of the February program came into operation,—all scruples could be dropped, and every expedient mobilized against Prussia.²⁶⁴ On the one hand, he could seek the neutrality and the moral support of Napoleon; on the other hand, at the proper time he could place the Schleswig-Holstein question finally in the hands of the Diet.

²⁶⁰ Bloomfield to Clarendon, April 28, No. 211 (F. O. 7 Austria 706).

²⁶¹ Mensdorff to Metternich and Apponyi, April 26, tg. This offer was made public soon after (*The Times*, April 30, No. 25485, Reuter tg. from Vienna April 28).

²⁶² Metternich to Mensdorff, April 28, tg. (Oncken: *Die Rheinpolitik* I, No. 72); Cowley to Clarendon, April 30, tg. (F. O. 27 France 1626).

²⁶³ La Marmora p. 182.

²⁶⁴ Mensdorff's *Vortrag*, February 19, 1866 (Appendix A, No. 13 below).

CHAPTER XI

THE COMPETITION FOR ALLIES

THE diplomacy of the *Ballplatz* was directed toward the formation of a united front of South Germany and Saxony with Austria, and the mapping of a common campaign of defense well in advance of the threatened rupture. "We need the South German states," wrote Mensdorff to Blome, "either as a reserve for all eventualities, or at least to keep a portion of the Prussian army from participating in the first invasion of Austria."¹ Mensdorff's expectations were not exorbitant, but he realized that to obtain even this minimum in good time would require constant pressure and encouragement.

The North German *Mittelstaaten*, Hanover and Hesse-Cassel, were a far less certain quantity. Mensdorff was aware that, because of the fear of the Prussian colossus and dislike for Augustenburg, there was little prospect of interesting these northern states in the common cause until the last moment.² Only when the existence of the Confederation was at stake, at the brink of war, could they perhaps be harnessed with the other federal cohorts. Their troops might then serve to detain thirty thousand Prussians from the attack on Bohemia. The remaining North German states were either too small or too Prussia-bound to be worth Mensdorff's attention.

Mensdorff's first concern was therefore with the states south of the Main river; he did not need to spur Baron Beust in Saxony. To the Austrian envoys in Stuttgart, Karlsruhe, and Darmstadt, he had written on February 28, in opening his peace campaign:

"Your Excellency [will] prepare the ground for important decisions, convincing the leading persons of the impossibility of remaining neutral

¹ Mensdorff to Blome, letter of March 16 (HHS: *Nachlass Reckberg*).

² Mensdorff to Gablenz, letter of March 13.

in a war between Austria and Prussia, and thereby gaining the influence and the vote of that Government for the active cooperation of the *Bund*, or at least the South German states, with Austria. . . ."³

As usual, Saxony and Hesse-Darmstadt were the readiest both in word and deed. Baron Dalwigk had the courage to offer his alliance (March 4) and to begin concerting plans for the eventuality of a rupture.⁴ Württemberg, too, seemed to equal them in loyalty to the federal cause. Mensdorff therefore made use of these three states to corral the two black sheep, Bavaria and Baden, into the fold.

Some of the earliest and most unreserved expressions of solidarity with Austria had come from Stuttgart. Both ministers and monarch had openly declared themselves in this sense.⁵ Queen Olga, boiling with anger at Bismarck's treatment of the Diet, set out for St. Petersburg armed with a memorandum of Varnbüler, to urge her father, the Tsar, to exert pressure in Berlin.⁶ Nearly a year later, when the Queen begged favors in Berlin for her conquered state, the King of Prussia reminded her that she had been the first to oppose him.⁷ She was in good company at court, for all the ministers but one were now pro-Austrian, and one of their number went so far as to desire the defeat of Prussia even at the cost of a cession of German land to France.⁸ The Swabian public were driven into Austria's arms by Manteuffel's draconic ordinance of March 11 in Schleswig.⁹

³ Mensdorff to Handel, Zulauf, and Brenner, February 28.

⁴ Brenner to Mensdorff, March 4, No. 4; also Vogt p. 87, without date. Dalwigk was afraid that Prussia would seize Mainz, the pivotal fortress in western Germany.

⁵ Not only to Baron Handel (Handel to Mensdorff, February 26, No. 12 *Vertraulich*) but to the French and Prussian envoys as well (Handel to Mensdorff, March 7, No. 15B; March 10, No. 17; Metternich to Mensdorff, March 22, No. 12C; *Origines* VIII, p. 25).

⁶ Handel to Mensdorff, February 26, No. 12 *Vertraulich*.

⁷ Letter to Queen Olga, c. December 2, 1866 (Draft: HAA).

⁸ Herr von Neurath (Handel to Mensdorff, March 5, No. 14 Postscript). Later, "an important Cabinet Minister" told the Baron, "Before we . . . let one Prussian soldier enter the land, we would call on Napoleon for aid." (Handel to Mensdorff, letter of April 11).

⁹ Handel to Mensdorff, March 21, No. 21A.

For Varnbüler's friendliness, Mensdorff expressed his warm gratitude,¹⁰ and the Austrian envoy, Baron Handel, a man of much experience, ability, and influence in Stuttgart, flattered the prime minister's pride and spurred his ambition. He encouraged him to accept the toga of leadership of the southwestern states, in place of the less reliable Pfordten.¹¹ Whether Varnbüler saw through this flattery or not, at least it pleased him to receive the confidence of Austria, and he worked zealously to bring neighboring Baden to the good cause.¹²

In Karlsruhe, Baron Edelsheim, the pro-Austrian minister-president, needed all the help he could get. He stood alone in the cabinet against advocates of neutrality or the Prussian alliance. With the greatest effort, Edelsheim had gained the Grand Duke's approval for a statement that neutrality was impossible, and that Baden would join the side which appealed to the Diet.¹³ Varnbüler seems to have tempted Baden with the prospect of partitioning the principalities of Hohenzollern, and he urged Austria to make a friendly gesture by replacing her chargé with a man of ministerial rank to represent the *Hofburg*,¹⁴—good advice which Austria did not adopt.

Varnbüler's relations with Pfordten were far less cordial;¹⁵ yet it became more and more evident that his policy and that of the other states were dominated by the attitude of Munich.¹⁶ Varnbüler's zeal was cooled by Pfordten's mistrustful criticism of Austria.¹⁷ Baron Handel therefore assisted Baron

¹⁰ Mensdorff to Handel, March 10.

¹¹ Handel to Mensdorff, March 5, No. 14. There is an excellent description and estimate of Varnbüler's policy at this time, in Fröbel II, pp. 412-414.

¹² Handel to Mensdorff, letter of March 21.

¹³ Vogt p. 91 (March 17).

¹⁴ Handel to Mensdorff, letter of March 21.

¹⁵ Handel to Mensdorff, February 16, No. 12 *Vertraulich*.

¹⁶ Varnbüler met Dalwigk and Edelsheim at Plauen to discuss Austria's plan of an interpellation by the *Mittelstaaten*, but they decided not to act without Bavarian support (Handel to Mensdorff, March 22, No. 22).

¹⁷ Handel to Mensdorff, letter of March 29.

Beust in healing the breach between the neighboring ministers, and laying the cornerstone of a closer relationship among the South German states.¹⁸

Early in the winter the Saxon premier and King Johann, ablest of the sovereigns of the secondary states, had begun to work upon Pfordten and that incalculable youth, Ludwig II, for the Austro-federal cause.¹⁹ Fully cognizant of the pivotal importance of Bavaria, Beust was anxious to have Mensdorff handle the sensitive Pfordten with gloves, not to push him too fast.²⁰ But the Prussian war-scare of March had turned the Saxons' thoughts to their own more exposed land. Three days after Franz Joseph had sent his first troops to Bohemia, Beust began to take military precautions.²¹ On March 19, the reservists were called six weeks early.²² Thus Saxony was the first of the secondary states to take the same step that Austria was so soon to regret.

Faithful as Beust was, he too had his moments of hesitation, for he had failed to convert Bavaria after all. Pfordten's "infatuation" for Bismarck, and seeming indifference to the cause of the *Bund*, worried the Saxon premier. "We must all hang like weights of lead upon the feet of this state," he told Varnbüler.²³ Then too, he still feared that Austria and Prussia might make a deal to divide the Duchies or the hegemony of Germany at the expense of the smaller states. He begged Austria to silence all such rumors once for all: she could not serve two masters at once.²⁴ Moreover, Saxon opinion was by no means unanimously for Austria. Many wanted peace at any price.²⁵ Beust had to stand upon the

¹⁸ Handel to Mensdorff, letter of April 5.

¹⁹ Werner to Mensdorff, March 19, No. 24A.

²⁰ Werner to Mensdorff, February 28, No. 17.

²¹ Werner to Mensdorff, March 17, No. 22A.

²² Hassel. *Aus dem Leben des Königs Albert von Sachsen II*, p. 223; Beust to Hohenthal, June 2, 1866 (*Staatsarchiv XI*, p. 65). On this point Friesen: *Erinnerungen II*, p. 137, needs correction.

²³ Werner to Mensdorff, March 27, No. 27B *Geheim*.

²⁴ Werner to Mensdorff, March 28, No. 28.

²⁵ Werner to Mensdorff, March 19, No. 24B *Reservirt*. For a critical examination of Saxon public opinion as reflected in the press, see Jordan: *Die öffentliche Meinung in Sachsen 1864-66*.

Bundesrecht four square. More and more, however, the Saxon premier's sure touch, his generally courageous advice, and his effective aid were being appreciated in the *Hofburg* itself. Probably these crucial months were preparing Beust's way into the *Haus am Ballhausplatz*.²⁶

* * * * *

Inevitably the focus of the diplomacy both of Vienna and of Berlin was in Bavaria.²⁷ Bismarck hoped to obtain Pfordten's neutrality, and although the Prussian envoy in Munich early warned him that Bavaria would cling to the federal pact, and that if Austria were clever she could draw the South German states with her, Bismarck persisted to the last in the belief that Bavaria might strike out on a neutral course.²⁸ The Austrians judged the situation more accurately, for they were certain of Bavaria's ultimate support. But, while Count Blome doubted that Pfordten could make up his mind to join Austria until the last moment, Mensdorff pressed for an earlier decision.

On February 28, the Austrian minister sent important instructions to his envoy on the Isar:

" . . . it is time to declare definitely in Munich, that if Prussia actually threw down the gauntlet, Austria would pick it up even in the face of a war with Italy at the same time." Prussia can mobilize in a few weeks,—the Diet takes eight months to vote an Execution. But if Bavaria and the other states have the will to punish the aggressor, such action can be voted in twenty-four hours. "Not in Frankfurt, but in Munich lies the decision whether we can count on South Germany in our calculations and maintain the important connection with Mainz . . . in order to outnumber our opponents." Freiherr von der Pfordten agrees with this when he says that a war will dissolve the Confederation. "It depends therefore on Bavaria to tell us beforehand what use she will make of her freedom."

²⁶ In November 1866, he was chosen by Franz Joseph to succeed Mensdorff as Austrian foreign minister.

²⁷ For Bavarian policy, see K. A. von Müller: *Bayern im Jahre 1866* pp. 1-61; M. Doeberl: *Bayern und Deutschland im 19ten Jahrhundert* p. 25 ff.

²⁸ Reuss to Bismarck, March 9, No. 16 *Vertraulich* (HAA); Bismarck's memorandum for the Council of June 12 (Sybel IV, p. 325; G. W. V, pp. 448-449). But Bismarck did not close his eyes to the opposite possibility (*Ibid.*).

In short, decide essentials by direct understanding between the cabinets, then speed formalities in Frankfurt. Mensdorff reserved more definite overtures until Prussia had shown her hand.²⁹

Thus confronted, Pfordten gave to Mensdorff through Count Bray on March 2 the formal assurance "that Austria, if she stands on the ground of the *Bundesrecht* and is attacked in Germany, can count on Bavaria," — but Bavaria would not emerge from her reserved attitude as long as negotiations continued between Prussia and Austria.³⁰ The catch in these words (the emphasis on *negotiations*) became apparent from Pfordten's "neutrality" circular of March 8, the evil effects of which, however, Mensdorff parried by his vigorous circulars of March 12 and 16, promising to take the Schleswig-Holstein negotiations to the Diet, if Prussia caused a rupture.³¹ Still, Count Blome maintained his conviction that Bavaria would not declare for Austria until the brink of war.³²

As the threats from Berlin became more alarming, however, Mensdorff pressed for military conversations in earnest. When Pfordten cast doubts on Austria's preparedness, Mensdorff assured him that the first attack of Prussia would meet the resistance it deserved, for all preparations that could be made secretly and without expense were already in full activity.

"But it is of the greatest importance for us to know without delay how long it would take for Bavaria to place her two corps on the borders, and whether with Bavaria's aid we could more easily assume the defense of Saxony in our plans, and if possible, meet a Prussian surprise," — and Mensdorff enclosed a copy of the Austro-Bavarian military agreement of 1850.³³

Pfordten's further objections were met one by one, as they arose. When he spoke of the danger to the Palatinate from a French invasion, Blome promised that Austria would richly

²⁹ Mensdorff to Blome, February 28.

³⁰ Doeberl pp. 26-27.

³¹ See above, chapter x.

³² Blome to Mensdorff, March 11, No. 17.

³³ Mensdorff to Blome, March 12, No. 2.

reward him for any losses sustained in winning the victory over Prussia.³⁴ When he spoke of the belief in army circles that the Austrian army was inferior to the Prussian, Mensdorff gave him the Austrian figures in strictest confidence.³⁵ When he demanded an assurance against a separate peace, Mensdorff favored him with such a promise, on condition that he would aid Austria's campaign in the Diet.³⁶ When the minister complained that he knew nothing of Austria's real aims, Mensdorff gave him a peep into the correspondence with Berlin.³⁷

"I am driving as hard as I can," wrote Blome, "and can only repeat that Pfordten is day by day becoming personally more favorable. But the difficulties to be overcome here are great."³⁸

The three leading military men, convinced that Prussia was better prepared for war, were cool toward Austria's advances. Pfordten's colleagues also were reluctant to take a stand. The King placed little trust in his ministers, and dreaded the thought of a war which would interrupt his "Schiller-Wagner fantasies."³⁹ "There is a lack of confidence in our star," wrote the Austrian envoy, with a sigh.⁴⁰

Blome did his best to counteract this defeatism. He discovered that the Prussians were making considerable headway in gaining the public for neutrality, by an active propaganda in the lesser *Bierhäuser*, and he urged Mensdorff to

³⁴ Blome to Mensdorff, March 11, No. 17. Blome did this on his own authority, but did not tell Pfordten so.

³⁵ Mensdorff to Blome, letter of March 16. Pfordten broke this confidence by informing Beust.

³⁶ Blome to Mensdorff, March 17, No. 19; Mensdorff to Blome, March 24. This note was left with Pfordten to show to the King.

³⁷ Blome to Mensdorff, March 26, No. 25B *Vertraulich*; Mensdorff to Blome, March 30.

³⁸ Blome to Mensdorff, letter of March 17.

³⁹ Stern's view (IX p. 466) that the King played a "minor role" can hardly be correct since his consent was necessary for all acts, and he was extremely obstinate at times (cf. Stern IX, p. 490, and Mensdorff's opinion, in *Preussische Jahrbücher* CLXXX, 1920, p. 337).

⁴⁰ Blome to Mensdorff, letter of March 17; March 26, No. 25D.

send secret agents to combat it.⁴¹ The Prussians too, he found, were spending huge sums to capture the party leaders, though they had not yet caught the King. Blome devoted his attention to the press with a lavish hand, and achieved satisfactory results on this ground.⁴² Finally the harassed Pfordten agreed that "in due time" a military officer would be sent to Vienna to concert action.⁴³ "I will go to war out of duty to the *Bund*, a sense of right, and to be consistent with the stand taken by Bavaria,—but everything else militates against the war,—Bavaria can only lose thereby."⁴⁴

What made the decision particularly hard for Pfordten was a new and highly confidential proposal from Berlin. In the middle of February as we have seen, Bismarck had begun to single out the self-important man for special confidences, and had bade Reuss draw him out on his favorite topic of the reform of the Confederation. Bismarck's happy manner of treating Pfordten as an honored equal, and talking to him as man to man,⁴⁵—a tone utterly lacking in Biegeleben's repertory,—won anew the heart of the Bavarian premier. Bismarck's offer to make Pfordten a partner in placing before the Diet the epoch-making reform proposals must have tempted him sorely.⁴⁶

But Pfordten had enough of the *Realpolitiker* in him to see the difficulties of the plan. King Ludwig shrank from the idea of a German parliament as from a ghost.⁴⁷ Bismarck proposed to set a date for its assembling, before divulging the details of the constitution it was to consider. This, said

⁴¹ Blome to Mensdorff, April 3, No. 28D. Whether Mensdorff did so, is not clear.

⁴² *Ibid.* Bismarck was active also in the South German press (*Handel to Mensdorff*, March 30, No. 25B).

⁴³ Blome to Mensdorff, March 26, No. 25D.

⁴⁴ Blome to Mensdorff, March 11, No. 17.

⁴⁵ See especially his letter of March 8 and dispatch of March 24 (G. W. V, pp. 391 ff., 419 ff.)

⁴⁶ Pfordten's own ideas are summarized by K. A. von Müller pp. 21-22; Sybel IV, pp. 235-237; Stern IX, p. 458.

⁴⁷ Reuss to Bismarck, March 27, No. 29 *Vertraulich* (HAA).

Pfordten, was a pistol placed at the breast of the smaller German courts.⁴⁸ But the greatest objection to the Bismarck plan, the point at which it came into direct conflict with the cherished policy of Pfordten as of all politicians of the "third group" in Germany, was the exclusion of Austria from the proposed Confederation. Pfordten left no doubt of his feelings on this score.⁴⁹ He tried hard to persuade Bismarck to open negotiations with Austria for the accomplishment of the triple Germany, and he promised to lend his support for it, both in Vienna and in the Bavarian press.⁵⁰ He warned Bismarck "not to stretch the bow too far": as yet, he said to Reuss, he had not heard a single official word from which to deduce the peaceful intentions of the Prussian government.⁵¹ He pointed out that Franz Joseph's military honor was engaged in the Duchies, and he urged Bismarck to build a "golden bridge" for Austria. He repeated to Reuss time and again, that "in the eyes of all Germany and Europe, Prussia would always be considered the aggressor in a conflict, because everyone knows that Prussia wants to possess the Duchies."⁵² Finally, when William, "forgetting Easter," called out seventy-five battalions of troops, Pfordten unhesitatingly began similar preparations, much to the surprise and disappointment of Bismarck and the King.⁵³

The Prussian armaments proved a turning-point. Henceforth for several weeks Bavarian policy veered toward Austria. The reasons may be found in Bismarck's undisguised pressing for war, in his less considerate treatment of Pfordten's mediation,⁵⁴ and in the illness which restricted his activity. In contrast, Mensdorff's peace offensive and recent

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹ Reuss to Bismarck, March 17, No. 23 *Ganz Vertraulich* (HAA).

⁵⁰ *Ibid.* and March 20, No. 26 (HAA).

⁵¹ Reuss to Bismarck, March 20, No. 26 (HAA).

⁵² Reuss to Bismarck, March 9, No. 16 *Vertraulich* (HAA). Sybel refrains from publishing these frank statements.

⁵³ Blome to Mensdorff, letter of March 28, despatch of March 31, No. 29; William to Bismarck, April 3 (Kohl: *Anhang* I, p. 127).

⁵⁴ Blome to Mensdorff, April 20 tg.

more tactful handling of Pfordten had warmed the Bavarian's impressionable heart. His support was won for an Austrian campaign to kill by kindness the scheme for federal reform with which Bismarck had now set all German tongues wagging.

On March 24, in a circular to all German courts complaining of Austrian troop movements, Bismarck had given notice that he intended soon to bring up in the Diet a proposal for federal reform. On April 9, without the desired backing of Bavaria, Bismarck's deputy, Savigny, launched the motion

"to summon, upon a day to be determined, an assembly of the entire nation elected by direct and universal suffrage, to receive and discuss the proposals of the German governments for a reform of the federal constitution; in the interim before the meeting of the assembly, to determine these proposals by mutual understanding between the governments."⁵⁵

Austria was ready to meet the attack. Almost unanimously, the secondary states had besought her not to reject the seductive idea, but to attack it indirectly by making reservations;⁵⁶ and most of the states were prepared to follow Austria's lead. Mensdorff found himself in the comfortable position of heading a ready-made federal coalition.

In several circular telegrams to his confederates, he cast aspersions on Bismarck's sincerity, insisted that he enlighten the states as to the details of the projected reform, and finally proposed that it be considered by a new committee of the Diet appointed expressly for this purpose.⁵⁷ In order to reinforce the contemporaneous peace offensive, Mensdorff further demanded that Prussia should cease arming before the reform could be discussed; but he failed to secure the support of his confederates in this.⁵⁸ For the other reservations, however, they backed Mensdorff staunchly. The foreign minister was

⁵⁵ *G. W. V.*, p. 449.

⁵⁶ For example, Blome to Mensdorff, April 9, No. 32A; Werner to Mensdorff, April 9, No. 34A; Handel to Mensdorff, April 11, No. 30.

⁵⁷ Circular tgs. of April 8, 9, 11.

⁵⁸ Circular tg. April 11, to Munich, Dresden, Stuttgart, Karlsruhe, Darmstadt.

aided by the poor reception of the reform plan among the public. "*Timeo Danaos et dona ferentes*" was in everyone's mind.⁵⁹ "Swindle and intrigue" were the watchwords given to the Austrian newspapers by the official press bureau, which exercised a strong pressure at this time.⁶⁰ In the *Allgemeine Zeitung*, Bismarck was compared to a doctor who inserted an advertisement in the papers stating that since his former patients had died [the Prussian *Landtag*], he would gladly take on new ones!⁶¹

Heartened by the almost universal scorn and suspicion, Mensdorff suggested to the German states that they meet in confidence and formulate a common policy toward the Prussian proposals.⁶² Pfordten's response was warm. Under his leadership, the heads of the governments of several states met at Augsburg and decided upon the reservations and the replies to be sent to Berlin,⁶³ — and forced Bismarck to take account of the unified opinion of official Germany. Mensdorff also capitalized in St. Petersburg the "revolutionary" parliament-idea against its Prussian authors.⁶⁴ For the present, the point had been broken from a proposal that made many a German ruler quake, and presented a grave danger to Austria's political system.

* * * * *

Meanwhile, since Mensdorff had failed in his fight against further military preparations in Austria, Prussia was certain to arm and eventually to attack. On April 26, therefore, Franz Joseph took a decisive step in the Schleswig-Holstein affair: he offered to Prussia again the advantages in the

⁵⁹ Bandmann p. 126. See also the apt citations in Stern IX, p. 460.

⁶⁰ Bandmann p. 158.

⁶¹ F. Giehne: *Zwei Jahre oesterreichischer Politik* I, p. 13. See also Bandmann p. 127 ff.

⁶² Circular tg. April 11, to five South German courts. The suggestion came from Blome (Blome to Mensdorff, March 31, No. 27), and possibly from Pfordten.

⁶³ In session April 22 to 26.

⁶⁴ Mensdorff to Revertera, April 19, No. 1; Revertera: "Erinnerungen eines Diplomaten in St. Petersburg," *Deutsche Revue* XXIX, 1904, Heft 2, p. 130.

Duchies which had been practically agreed upon before the Gastein crisis.⁶⁵ This time no mention was made of the Prince of Augustenburg.⁶⁶ If these terms were rejected, Austria would place the entire question in the hands of the Frankfurt Diet.⁶⁷ This fulfillment of the promise made in March to the German states was soon announced to them and published in the press.⁶⁸ Pfordten was much pleased with the Austrian note and sent his thanks to Mensdorff.⁶⁹ Beust was glad also, but thought the action tardy.⁷⁰ As Prussia's rejection was a foregone conclusion, the public at large could expect action in the Diet in the near future. In the present calculations of the *Ballplatz*, however, the timing of that final stroke depended, first, on the actions of their adversary in Berlin, and second, on the progress of the Austrian mobilization.

Soon after the first orders for the northern army had been sent out from Vienna, the five southern states of Germany were urgently advised by Mensdorff to catch up with Prussia's armaments as speedily and secretly as possible.⁷¹ Almost at once, the Austrian move was imitated by Saxony, which had been keeping in touch with the Austrian general staff since the end of March, and exchanging military suggestions through diplomatic channels.⁷² Bismarck welcomed the Saxon and Austrian armaments as an excuse for mobilizing the entire Prussian army,⁷³ the orders for which went out between May

⁶⁵ See chapter vii above.

⁶⁶ The purpose of this omission was to respect the susceptibilities of Hanover and Hesse-Cassel, and insure their cooperation (Mensdorff to Ingelheim, April 28).

⁶⁷ Mensdorff to Karolyi, April 26, No. 2 (*Staatsarchiv* X, No. 225 B).

⁶⁸ Circulars Nos. 1 and 3, April 28; Werther to Bismarck, May 2, tg. (HAA).

⁶⁹ Blome to Mensdorff, April 29, tg.

⁷⁰ Werner to Mensdorff, April 28, No. 47.

⁷¹ Circular No. 2, April 28, to Munich, Dresden, Stuttgart, Karlsruhe, Darmstadt.

⁷² Gustav von Schubert: *Lebenserinnerungen* pp. 470-472. Werner to Mensdorff, tgs. April 3 and 4, despatches April 1, 18, 20; Mensdorff to Werner, April 2.

⁷³ *Staatsarchiv* X, No. 2261.

3 and 10. But Beust was not to be outmanoeuvred. He revived the abortive interpellation idea of March, and with much ado, introduced a motion in the Diet to force Prussia to show cause for her armaments.⁷⁴ The favorable vote of 10 against 5, in which Bavaria and Hanover joined with Saxony and Austria, registered publicly a moral victory for the upholders of federal unity, and a slap at Bismarck. For a moment, the *Ballplatz* expected the rupture to come.⁷⁵ But Bismarck awaited more propitious circumstances.

All these events aided the Austro-federal cause. The halting states were encouraged to take action. King Ludwig's scruples were temporarily swept away by Bismarck's unsatisfactory reply to the Saxon interpellation, and by the mobilization of Prussia's Westphalian corps. On May 11, Pfordten could announce that the entire Bavarian army had been ordered to the colors.⁷⁶ His example was soon followed by Würtemberg, Darmstadt, and Nassau. "As insistently as you have hitherto seen me working for peace," said Pfordten to Blome, "just so energetic will you find me in preparing for war, if it is really as inevitable as it now appears."⁷⁷ The Bavarian newspapers, with active assistance from Austrian sources, had contributed to a wave of patriotic ardor in the kingdom.⁷⁸ Blome chuckled when he wrote to Mensdorff, "The situation is such that no treaty of Ried is necessary to draw Bavaria with us."⁷⁹ Yet he warned again that Pfordten would not march until after the first shot was fired.⁸⁰ "Neither

⁷⁴ As a result of Austrian pressure (circular tg. May 7), they voted also to ask Prussia not to exceed her allotment of troops in Mainz, and thus checked a possible military *coup* in that pivotal fortress.

⁷⁵ "This incident can precipitate the crisis . . ." (Mensdorff to Metternich, May 4 tg.). Mensdorff despatched proper instructions to Kübeck (May 4 tg.; May 5 *Geheim*).

⁷⁶ *Staatsarchiv* XI, pp. 28-29. For an account of the decisive Bavarian council of May 9, see E. von Bomhard: *Staatsminister a. D. Eduard von Bomhard, Ein Lebens- und Charakterbild* (Munich 1913).

⁷⁷ Blome to Mensdorff, May 9, No. 45B.

⁷⁸ Blome to Mensdorff, letter of May 5.

⁷⁹ Blome to Mensdorff, letter of May 8.

⁸⁰ Blome to Mensdorff, May 15, No. 48.

a direct nor indirect understanding [with Prussia] can avail us longer. . . . Any compromise would be absolutely fatal . . . Above all, the war must come, and come soon."⁸¹

However strong the echo that Blome's call for the rupture found in certain Austrian circles, Franz Joseph was not ready for the war nor did he intend to assume the initiative. In the first place, the mobilization was less than half completed.⁸² In the second place, with unaccustomed subtlety, the sovereign and his ministers, Esterhazy and Mensdorff, were engaged in two simultaneous, though distinct and contradictory negotiations, the one with France, the other with Prussia.

SECRET NEGOTIATIONS WITH FRANCE⁸³

The *rapprochement* with Napoleon had been materially advanced by the exchange of letters between the sovereigns during the winter months. Metternich had zealously fostered the growing intimacy, though forbidden still to discuss the ticklish questions of Venetia and Rome until a general conflict was really imminent.⁸⁴ Even after Bismarck's strong note on the Altona assembly, Mensdorff had cautioned Metternich not to take a tone hostile to Prussia.⁸⁵ He was instructed, however, to watch Goltz' movements more closely than ever.

⁸¹ Blome to Mensdorff, letter of May 8.

⁸² Mensdorff to Blome, May 19 *Reservirt*.

⁸³ These negotiations, of which Sybel (IV, pp. 270, 275, 295-302) knew only the outlines, were partially revealed by Plener (*Erinnerungen* I, pp. 72-87) and by Ollivier (*L'Empire Libéral* VIII, pp. 135-156, 180-185), whose works were used by Friedjung (*Kampf* I, pp. 267-272, 320-325) and Brandenburg (*Untersuchungen* pp. 467-469). The subsequent elaborate publications by the French government (*Les Origines Diplomatiques de la Guerre de 1870-1871*, volumes VIII, IX, and X) and by Hermann Oncken (*Die Rheinpolitik Kaiser Napoleons III*, volume I, pp. 85-276 *passim*) have made possible the fuller and more accurate account of Alfred Stern (*Geschichte Europas* IX, pp. 470-475, 482-487). See also the dissertation of Adolf Kulessa (*Die Kongressidee Napoleons III. im Mai 1866, passim*). An examination of the Austrian and British documents has enabled me to check and amplify their story at certain points.

⁸⁴ See above, chapter ix.

⁸⁵ Mensdorff to Metternich, February 9, 1866.

The Austrian ambassador was not worried about Goltz nor about any offers from Berlin. He saw correctly that Napoleon would not favor one power nor the other until he was certain that they could no longer patch up their differences and combine against him.⁸⁶ If war broke out, Napoleon would await the result of the first battle before taking sides. Meanwhile, however, Austria needed Napoleon's moral support more than Prussia did,—and Metternich tried to impress this point strongly upon his superiors in Vienna,—for upon French moral support depended the abstention of Italy, and upon Italian neutrality depended Austria's victory over Prussia. "From this point of view, a very active cooperation on the part of France appears to me to be an essential condition of our chances of success."⁸⁷ For the present, all that Austria could secure from Napoleon was a repetition of the admonition that Italy would attack Austria at her own risk, and the promise that Napoleon would use all possible *moral* means to check Victor Emanuel.

Whatever the value of the admonition, Napoleon had no intention of using actual pressure upon Italy. In fact, he had already told Nigra that he would not restrain Italy, though he would not aid her.⁸⁸ Metternich's policy therefore was a compound of illusion and clear-sightedness. He over-estimated Napoleon's good-will, but he wisely urged the fundamental necessity of gaining Italian neutrality. Behind this advice we may read Metternich's warning to the *Ballplatz* to prepare for sacrifices for this objective. He himself had overstepped his instructions to this end, by hinting to Nigra that if Austria gained territory in a German war, she might cede Venetia

⁸⁶ This and the following from Mensdorff to Metternich, February 17, No. 7B (Oncken I, p. 86 ff.).

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸⁸ La Marmora p. 72. Napoleon advised Italy to encourage Prussia's ardor for war, while he himself would suggest to Austria the Rumanian exchange (Nigra to La Marmora, letter of March 1: E. Passamonti: "Costantino Nigra ed Alfonso La Marmora dal 1862 al 1866," in *Risorgimento Italiano* XXII, 1929, p. 448).

to Italy.⁸⁰ Had he continued these overtures two months longer, they might have deterred the hesitant Italian premier from joining Bismarck.

Mensdorff and Esterhazy appreciated the necessity for securing Italian neutrality with the help of the *Tuileries*. They were told by Gramont that Bismarck was bidding high for French favor: he had offered the Rhinelands in return for Napoleon's permission to take compensations in Germany.⁸⁰ These were the weeks when Bismarck's explosive utterances were crowding in upon the *Ballplatz*, and Mensdorff was charting his diplomatic campaign.⁸¹ Still unwilling to make any serious concessions, the *Ballplatz* tried to gain further French favor by supporting French policy in the Rumanian conference.⁸² Franz Joseph wrote a warmer letter to Napoleon, expressing the hope that the bonds between the two empires might become closer if alarming complications should arise in Europe.⁸³ Mensdorff tried to secure a warning from Napoleon against Bismarck's threats, since pure neutrality simply encouraged an aggressor. He also tried to frighten France by describing the calamity that an Austrian defeat would bring to Europe.⁸⁴ Lastly, Mensdorff touched the prickly question of a congress. Austria would prefer a conference to dispose of Schleswig alone, but if Napoleon should propose a general congress, Metternich should not reject it. Austria's attendance would depend on circumstances, chief of which would be a previous understanding on Venetia.⁸⁵

In spite of these diplomatic offerings, Napoleon refused to be drawn out of his neutral attitude. Indeed, the imperial couple told Metternich frankly that they could not keep Italy from making the most of Prussia's temptations,—they had

⁸⁰ La Marmora p. 71.

⁸⁰ Meysenbug to Mensdorff, letter of February 22.

⁸¹ See chapter x above

⁸² *Ibid.* But this was done only half-heartedly and intermittently.

⁸³ Draft letter dated March 11, sent by Mensdorff to Metternich, March 12, No. 1.

⁸⁴ Mensdorff to Metternich, March 1, Nos. 1 and 2; March 12, No. 3.

⁸⁵ Mensdorff to Metternich, March 1, No. 4 *réservee* (Henry pp. 205-206).

hoped, they said, that Austria herself would take the lead in conciliating Italy.⁹⁶ As General Govone's mission to Berlin became known,⁹⁷ they hinted more broadly that Austria would do well to exchange Venetia and take the Danubian Principalities, or Bosnia, Serbia, and Herzegovina.⁹⁸

But the Austrians, unwilling to offer Venetia until the rupture was close at hand, were only annoyed by this well-meant advice from Paris.⁹⁹ The ambassador chided the Empress for her *démarche*; it showed, he said, a lack of diplomatic finesse and no instinct for the "correct moment,"—and to illustrate further these faults, Metternich launched into an *exposé* of Napoleon's mistakes in the Polish affair and after.¹⁰⁰ When Eugénie saw Metternich again several days later, she told him that she had reported his criticisms to the Emperor, and with a laugh, she confessed that neither she nor her husband understood diplomacy! The exquisite irony in these words doubtless escaped Metternich,¹⁰¹ since he was ignorant of the fact that at that moment Napoleon was giving Italy the signal to proceed seriously with the alliance negotiations in Berlin.¹⁰² From then on he continued to encourage the Italians to consummate the treaty with Prussia.¹⁰³ Thus the iron ring closed around Austria, after she had lightly refused what proved to be her last opportunity to prevent its formation. Was it the Bonapartes, or was it the Hofburg that lacked the diplomatic instinct for seizing the "correct mo-

⁹⁶ Metternich to Mensdorff, March 10, tg. No. 26.

⁹⁷ In Paris, through Benedetti's letter of March 11 (*Origines* VII, p. 410). The *Bullplatz* had learned of it several days earlier (Mensdorff to Metternich, March 8, tg.; letter of March 12).

⁹⁸ Through Gramont (Mensdorff to Metternich, March 16, tg.), and through Eugénie (Metternich to Mensdorff, March 22, No. 12B *secret*; Oncken I, pp. 115-117), since Napoleon had promised Metternich that he personally would not raise the question of Venetia.

⁹⁹ Metternich to Mensdorff, March 7, No. 99B (Oncken I, pp. 99-100); Mensdorff to Metternich, March 12, No. 3.

¹⁰⁰ This and the following from Metternich to Mensdorff, March 22, No. 12B *secret* (Oncken I, pp. 115-117).

¹⁰¹ Cf. Salomon: *L'Ambassade de Richard de Metternich* p. 123.

¹⁰² Chiala p. 79; La Marmora p. 124.

¹⁰³ Chiala pp. 92-95; La Marmora p. 127.

ment?" In blissful ignorance of the consequences, Mensdorff thanked his envoy for rejecting the French hints about Venetia; he was relieved by the hollow assurances of Napoleon's further favor, and considered that the situation had cleared appreciably.¹⁰⁴ Such were the delusions of the *Ballplatz*. In reality, with the conclusion of the Italo-Prussian alliance, Austria's hour had struck.

* * * * *

The main lines of Austria's policy toward France and Italy in the event of a war with Prussia had been taking shape since the crisis of 1862. First and foremost, Austria would not turn to France until Prussia forced her to do so, either by overtures from Berlin to Paris, or by threatening Austria with war.¹⁰⁵ Secondly, Austria would not cede Venetia to Italy,—the prerequisite to an alliance with France,—except for equivalent territory in Germany.¹⁰⁶ Thirdly, Austria could not allow France to annex any German territory, but Napoleon might take any non-German territory he wished.¹⁰⁷ Fourthly, since Austria's strong position in Venetia was in some degree a protection for the Pope in Rome, it could not be relinquished without substituting other securities, which Austria sought in the restitution of the former papal lands and a territorial guarantee by the Catholic powers.¹⁰⁸

Since this program of *rapprochement* with France and Italy was extremely repugnant to Franz Joseph and to most of his advisors, there was no desire to institute it until the last possible moment. But they could not gain Italy's neutrality without yielding Venice; they *would* not yield Venice without

¹⁰⁴ Mensdorff to Metternich, March 29, No. 7.

¹⁰⁵ For the former, see Rechberg's instructions of May 1862 (Hengelmüller: "Graf Alois Karolyi," in *Deutsche Revue* XXXVIII, 1913, Heft 3, p. 302); for the latter, see chapter x above.

¹⁰⁶ Rechberg to Metternich, March 21, 1863 (Appendix A, No. 1), where Balkan territory is also included. This additional demand was dropped before 1866.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁸ This was not specifically mentioned in the instructions to Metternich of March 1863, but was always implicit in Austria's Italian policy. (Cf. chapters i and v above, and Mensdorff to Hübner, April 18, 1866, No. 1).

getting Silesia; they could not get Silesia without war; and they did not want war if it could be possibly avoided. At this time Mensdorff, Esterhazy, and Franz Joseph were working to prevent Bismarck from securing his *casus belli*. For these reasons they resisted all the hints from Paris. Once forced into war, however, by Berlin diplomacy, "every mine would be sprung." The *Ballplatz* must have calculated that a mere conditional promise of Venetia would keep Italy out of Bismarck's toils, and enable Austria to throw her whole weight against Prussia so that she might conquer Silesia. This calculation was based on the erroneous premise that the Italians could be bribed, even though under arms, to desist from the fight when it was too late for Bismarck to withdraw. As usual, the Austrians grossly underestimated both Bismarck's acumen, and the strength of Italian national feeling. They ignored the fact that Bismarck would not have advanced so far toward war without making certain of Italy's alliance, and that the Italians were burning to conquer Venetia with their *own* swords.

From the third week in March, the French desisted from further efforts to move Austria. They had given her more than a fair chance to save herself before it was too late. They hoped that the armament race would soon make war inevitable. Metternich now spent his time trying to draw reassuring words from the Emperor,¹⁰⁹ in return for which he seems to have promised (without instructions to do so) that Austria would come to no terms with Prussia without previously consulting the French government.¹¹⁰

The middle of April saw a concerted British effort to induce Austria to cede the southern province, pressure being used by Clarendon in London, Cowley in Paris, and Bloomfield in

¹⁰⁹ Metternich to Mensdorff, April 9, No. 15B *réservee*; April 10, tg. No. 42.

¹¹⁰ Cowley to Clarendon, April 9, No. 444 Most Confidential (F. O. 27 France 1615), from Metternich himself; Mensdorff repudiated Metternich's action (Bloomfield to Clarendon, letter of April 19. F. O. 356 Bloomfield Papers 39).

Vienna.¹¹¹ Lord Clarendon argued ably and at great length to convince Apponyi that "Venetia was only a source of weakness and insecurity for us, a veritable Achilles' heel, which ruined our finances, deprived us of freedom of movement, and embarrassed our position." He cited the authority of Baron Rothschild to show that Italy would and could pay £40 million for Venetia, to which sum "all the bankers of Europe would contribute."¹¹² He stirred Austria's pride by warning her not to imitate the patient pusillanimity of Turkey but to act resolutely, either to turn upon her enemies, or to come to terms with them if she did not feel strong enough to fight them.¹¹³ Not to be outdone, Lord Russell and Mr. Gladstone expressed forcible opinions upon the cession of Venetia, in private letters to the Austrian ambassador, the former in terms hardly compatible with good sense.¹¹⁴ Lord Bloomfield renewed the attack, on the heels of a parallel move by Gramont, and for the first time heard from Mensdorff's lips the remark that if an exchange with Silesia could be arranged it "might be prudent to consider the question."¹¹⁵

All this pressure, coupled with the critical state of the armament race with Prussia, caused the Ballplatz to prepare for

¹¹¹ Apponyi to Mensdorff, April 7, No. 25E (cf. *Origines* VIII, pp. 306-307); Metternich to Mensdorff, April 11, tg. No. 44 (from Cowley); Cowley to Clarendon, April 12, No. 452 Most Confidential (F. O. 27 France 1615); Bloomfield to Clarendon, letter of April 12 (F. O. 356 Bloomfield Papers 39); *Origines* VIII, p. 238.

¹¹² Apponyi to Mensdorff, April 7, No. 25E.

¹¹³ Apponyi to Mensdorff, letter of April 30.

¹¹⁴ Russell to Apponyi, Pembroke Lodge, April 16 (copy in HHS). In a second letter early in May, Russell argued that Austria owed Italy compensation for the destruction of the Venetian republic, for which France got the blame and Austria the profit (Apponyi to Mensdorff, letter of May 8). Lord Clarendon "entirely disapproved" of Russell's *démarche*, and praised Mensdorff's spirited reply (*Letters of Queen Victoria*, second series, I, p. 326).—Gladstone's letter, not found in HHS nor in Morley's biography, is mentioned in Bloomfield's letter to Clarendon, April 26 (F. O. 356 Bloomfield Papers 39).

¹¹⁵ Bloomfield to Clarendon, April 16, No. 180 Secret and Confidential (F. O. 7 Austria 706). For Gramont's *démarche*, *Ibid.*, and *Origines* VIII, p. 246 (where the initiative is ascribed to Mensdorff).

the turning point. Simultaneously with his last disarmament offer to Prussia on April 18, Count Mensdorff sent a private letter to Metternich, asking whether Napoleon had any engagements which would prevent an *entente* with Austria, in case Prussia rejected the Austrian note.¹¹⁶ To Metternich's question, Drouyn replied that the Emperor was free and glad to discuss an understanding provided it remained secret and was as extensive as possible.¹¹⁷ But Napoleon himself still doubted whether the time had come to talk of far-reaching plans.¹¹⁸

The following week witnessed a rapid change. The French Emperor fearing that disarmament would succeed, proposed a congress in order to keep the control of the situation in his own hands.¹¹⁹ Meanwhile, Austria's mobilization seemed to cut off the possibility of any arrangement between the two German powers. Consequently Napoleon at last was ready for proposals from both parties. Within four days, the hint was passed to Metternich by the Emperor, the Empress, and the foreign minister individually.¹²⁰ Metternich eagerly wired the news, and advised that the congress, with a previous Austrian-English-French understanding, would be a good thrust against Bismarck.¹²¹

Mensdorff's reaction was different. He too was now ready to make proposals, but saw no good in the congress, "for it will achieve either nothing, or a settlement the cost of which

¹¹⁶ Letter not found in HHS, but sufficiently indicated in Mensdorff's *Vortrag* of April 20 (see chapter x); and Metternich's tg. of April 21 (Oncken I, p. 139) seems to be the reply to it.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁸ Metternich to Mensdorff, April 24, tg. No. 59 (Oncken I, p. 139); Drouyn to Gramont, April 20 (*Origines* VIII, p. 291).

¹¹⁹ Kulessa pp. 24-25. Cf. *Origines* VIII, p. 322. The popular outcry in France against the war probably contributed to Napoleon's decision. For the congress negotiations, Kulessa has the most complete account, but he failed to use Ramsay: *Idealism and Foreign Policy*, which contains important quotations from unpublished British documents (pp. 182-185, 202-205).

¹²⁰ Metternich to Mensdorff, April 28, tg. No. 60; April 29, tg. No. 62; May 1, tg. No. 65 (Oncken I, pp. 144-145).

¹²¹ Metternich to Mensdorff, April 28, tg. No. 60 (Oncken I, p. 144).

we shall have to pay by the cession of Venetia without equivalent compensation in Germany.”¹²² In order to avoid the congress, Mensdorff determined to spring his principal mine. He dared not commit his offers to an official document, but addressed a private letter to Metternich on April 30, no copy of which was kept in the *Ballplatz*.¹²³ Without this key-document, however, the proposals can be reconstructed from other sources.¹²⁴ They conformed obviously to the program already outlined, and were summarized later by Mensdorff as follows:

“In case of war between Austria and Prussia, if the attitude of France were such as to enable us more easily to achieve a complete success, Venetia might be abandoned after the peace, on condition that Austria obtained an equivalent territorial compensation in Germany, and the temporal power of the Pope be reestablished on a solid basis in Italy.”¹²⁵

The “solid basis” for the power of the Holy Father was to be found in a Franco-Austrian guarantee, and in an increase of his territory as much as necessary for “military independence.”¹²⁶ By this the *Ballplatz* understood at least the restoration of Umbria and the Marches, thus inserting an effective barrier between north and south Italy.¹²⁷ For the gift of Venetia, Italy was to assume the Venetian portion of the

¹²² Mensdorff to Metternich, April 29, tg.

¹²³ The existence of Mensdorff's letter of April 30 is proved by telegrams from him to Metternich (April 29) “Un courrier part demain avec des instructions détaillées pour vos pourparlers confidentiels avec L'Empereur Napoléon”—(May 4) “Nous attendons avec impatience les rapports détaillés de V. A sur le résultat des démarches et des entretiens auxquels ma lettre du 30 Avril aura donné lieu” Plener I, p. 73, and Brandenburg: *Untersuchungen* p. 467, give the wrong date for this offer

¹²⁴ Chiefly Ernst von Plener: *Erinnerungen* I, p. 73, substantiated and partially supplemented by Mensdorff to Metternich, May 8, tg. sent 2.55 p.m., and Metternich to Mensdorff, May 29, No. 29B *Confidentiel* (both in Oncken I, pp. 178, 238-239).

¹²⁵ Mensdorff to Hubner (Rome), May 25, 1866, No. 3 *réservee*. The original demand for Balkan territory in addition to German was no longer pressed. (For the former, see Rechberg to Metternich, March 21, 1863: Appendix A, No. 1).

¹²⁶ Plener I, p. 73 ff. for this and the remaining terms of the offer.

¹²⁷ Mensdorff to Metternich, December 12, 1865; cf. Sybel IV, p. 295 (Arnim from Antonelli from Drouyn).

Austrian debt and to pay the cost of the fortresses. To protect Trieste, Mensdorff insisted that Venice's harbor be neutralized. Compensation was asked for the Dukes of Tuscany and Modena; and the restoration of the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies was called "desirable."¹²⁸ Behind these propositions lay the belief that Napoleon would be willing to sacrifice Italy's unity in order to gain Italy's complete independence from Austrian rule.¹²⁹

For Austrian policy, the most essential demand was the neutrality of Italy and France. Once enabled to throw her whole force against Prussia, the Austrians might conquer the compensation for Venetia in Silesia. But if Russia intervened, then they wanted the prospect of active aid from France. This was now hinted in Mensdorff's letter, and in return, he held out vaguely and laconically the assent of Austria to "French annexations."¹³⁰ What did he mean by this phrase,—Belgium, or Italian territory, or the Rhineland?

The evening before Mensdorff had written his important letter, he had received the following interesting proposal from Paris: "neutralization of the Rhineland under a neutral, though German, dynasty" with the understanding that neither France nor Germany should "touch" the new state.¹³¹ This suggestion represented a considerable relaxation of Napoleon's reputed desire for the outright possession of these territories. Though detached from the Confederation, they would remain a purely German state, less likely to pass under French control than Belgium or Switzerland which had French-speaking minorities.¹³² Ingenious as was this compromise between

¹²⁸ Since 1859 the claims of the Duke of Parma had been dropped.

¹²⁹ Mensdorff to Metternich, June 1, 1866, No. 5

¹³⁰ Plener I, p. 73 ff.

¹³¹ Metternich to Mensdorff, April 29, tg No. 62 (Oncken p 144). Many variations of this idea appear in the French, Prussian, and Italian documents, but this was the only form in which Austria was asked to approve it.

¹³² To be sure, Frenchmen like Persigny considered the Rhine state merely a step toward eventual French control (Oncken I, p 212). That Napoleon himself definitely expected such a development is uncertain, and cannot be deduced from isolated remarks of his. To consider the Rhine state as equivalent to French annexation, as Oncken does, seems unjustified.

the French and the Austrian points of view on the always contentious Rhine question, it elicited no direct reply from Mensdorff. His hint of permission for "French annexations" probably, however, was intended to convey the impression that Austria would be lenient on this question. The phrase was vague enough to leave room for escape. In actual fact, the *Ballplatz* was strongly opposed to the cession of German land to France; but like Bismarck, they would let Napoleon help himself to *non*-German territories, while leading him to think that they might even yield on Germany.¹³³ If defeated, Austria might be forced to concede this point, but meanwhile Mensdorff wished to keep Napoleon in hopes.

Metternich threw himself into the new work with his usual ardor and over-sanguine imagination, which was stimulated by the equally sanguine expectations of Caesar himself. It was not long before both dreamers came back to earth. The Italians refused to break their alliance with Prussia, though they indicated a willingness to abandon it when it lapsed two months hence.¹³⁴ If Italy would not remain neutral, France was still less willing to engage to take up arms later on Austria's behalf. Moreover, Napoleon could not agree to institute by force the proposed political arrangements in the Italian peninsula, though he seemed willing to sanction changes if the present situation collapsed spontaneously.¹³⁵ These barren fruits were served up in a counter-project, and taken back to Vienna by the Austrian chargé, Count Mülinen, where they were at once rejected.¹³⁶ Napoleon regretted that the *entente* could not proceed farther; the Italians had bound themselves prematurely to Prussia, he explained to Metter-

¹³³ Instructions to Metternich, March 21, 1863 (Appendix A, No. 1); Biegeleben's memorandum of October 1864 (Engel-Janosi; *Krise* p. 191); cf. Plener I, p. 73 (Belgium).

¹³⁴ Chiala p. 170.

¹³⁵ Metternich to Mensdorff, May 29, No. 29B *Confidentiel* (Oncken I, pp. 238-239).

¹³⁶ The only record of this counter-project is in Mensdorff's tg. to Metternich, May 8, sent 2 55 p.m. (Oncken I, p. 178).

nich, though he himself was free from such an engagement.¹³⁷ Under these circumstances, both parties determined to draw back and await events, each hoping that the other would lower his terms at a later date.

Meanwhile, Franz Joseph and his ministers had become interested in a secret plan for a radical transformation of their relations with Prussia.

THE GABLENZ NEGOTIATIONS WITH PRUSSIA

During the critical days of the armament race in mid-April, Baron Anton von Gablenz, long a citizen of Prussia and now member of the Prussian Diet, had been discussing with his brother, Franz Joseph's *Statthalter* in Kiel, the draft of a mediation project which he wished to submit to the highest authorities first in Vienna and then in Berlin.¹³⁸ To assure him the proper entrée, the *Statthalter* provided him with a letter to Count Moriz Esterhazy.¹³⁹ With this passport to the inner circles, Gablenz soon arrived in the Habsburg capital with the ostensible purpose of entering his son in the Austrian army.¹⁴⁰ He was received by the ailing Esterhazy, who pa-

¹³⁷ Metternich to Mensdorff, May 9, tg. No. 72; May 10, tg. No. 73 (Oncken I, p. 180).

¹³⁸ The fullest and most reliable printed sources for these negotiations are Sybel IV, pp. 277-284, 288; G. W. V, pp. 479, 488-489, 502-503, 521; Latrille: "Zur Sendung des Freiherrn A. von Gablenz," in *Deutsches Wochenblatt* XI, 1898, No. 37, pp. 438-441 (from papers of Anton von Gablenz; an article which escaped historians before Stern). The Berlin documents have not been exhausted, and the Gablenz documents and others in Vienna have hardly been touched heretofore.

Of general accounts, Stern's is the best (IX, pp. 475-477), though incomplete and containing minor inaccuracies. The episode is discussed at length and differently interpreted by Friedjung I, pp. 305-312; Brandenburg: *Untersuchungen* pp. 517-519; Lenz pp. 298-302, 307-308; Egelhaaf: "Die Sendung Antons von Gablenz," in *Deutsches Wochenblatt* XI, 1898, No. 27, pp. 406-407.

¹³⁹ Dated April 20. Stern IX, p. 475 incorrectly speaks of it as a letter to Mensdorff. Ludwig von Gablenz did write to Mensdorff also, on April 20, but expressly stated that he wished to spare Mensdorff's time by sending his brother to Esterhazy.

¹⁴⁰ Ludwig von Gablenz to Mensdorff, letter of April 20; *Allgemeine Zeitung* No. 154, Vienna correspondence dated June 1, 1866. Gablenz reached Vienna on April 23, according to the *Neue Freie Presse*, No. 593.

tiently heard his plans and sent him on to Mensdorff, with a favorable recommendation.¹⁴¹ The foreign minister received him through the *petite entrée*, and kept the fact of the interview and subsequent negotiations secret from Biegeleben and everyone else but Esterhazy and his sovereign.¹⁴²

Gablenz proposed a compromise in the Schleswig-Holstein and *Bundesreform* questions: the Duchies would be placed under a Prussian prince, independent of the Prussian government; Austria would be paid the expenses of her Danish war; the command of the military forces of all Germany would be divided between Prussia and Austria; both countries would settle the other details of federal reform on this dualistic basis, and found an "enduring alliance."¹⁴³

As little as the idea of a division of Germany appealed to the Austrians, they did not reject a discussion with Berlin on the subject. Mensdorff insisted, however, that the proposals must first be sanctioned by Bismarck. He gave Gablenz an introductory letter, and with the aid of Savigny, the negotiator secured his first interview with Bismarck in the evening of April 30.¹⁴⁴ Here too he was favorably received.

For the next four weeks, this dove of peace flew back and forth between Berlin and Vienna. Bismarck made some changes in details; and Mensdorff demanded more safeguards for Austria, which Bismarck rejected. Finally the plan was elaborated in the form of a treaty. An attempt to induce the Grand Duke of Weimar to stand sponsor for it failed.¹⁴⁵ On May 26, Franz Joseph discussed this draft-treaty with Belcredi, Esterhazy, and Mensdorff, and decided not to continue further negotiations unless Gablenz could per-

¹⁴¹ Esterhazy to Mensdorff, letter of April 25 (Redlich: *Reichsproblem* II, p. 774).

¹⁴² Vogt p. 93. Belcredi was later admitted to the secret.

¹⁴³ Latrille, *loc. cit.* p. 438 (draft of terms as first presented in Berlin).

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.* p. 438.

¹⁴⁵ For this Weimar incident, see Anton to Ludwig von Gablenz, letter of May 10 (Appendix A, No. 18); Johannes Schultze: *Kaiser Wilhelms Weimarer Briefe* II, pp. 75-79; Karl Alexander to Franz Joseph, letter of May 22; Franz Joseph to Karl Alexander, letter of May 29 (draft in HHS).

suade Bavaria or Saxony to sponsor the propositions,—in reality a rejection.¹⁴⁶ Thereupon Gablenz knocked at Beust's door, but naturally failed to interest him in a plan to take power away from the secondary states.¹⁴⁷ Bismarck laid the blame for the failure upon Austria, and persuaded the King that nothing remained but war.

Even with the detailed accounts of this singular episode that we possess, four points remain disputed or insufficiently clarified: the share of General Ludwig von Gablenz in the authorship and negotiation of the compromise; the threat against France, so often a part of the story as Bismarck recounted it in later years; Bismarck's own share and motives; and finally, the personal attitudes of Mensdorff, Esterhazy, Belcredi, and Franz Joseph. Fortunately the Vienna documents throw some new light on all of these questions.¹⁴⁸

While earlier authorities assigned to Anton von Gablenz the entire credit for initiating and conducting the negotiations, Alfred Stern, the first to use the papers of Ludwig, the *Statthalter*, seems to give equal credit to both brothers.¹⁴⁹ After a careful survey of all the available evidence, however, one is more likely to conclude that, in inception as well as execution, the North German played the more important part, while the Austrian general's role was secondary, though not inconsequential.

Not in April 1866, but almost a year earlier, the compromise idea made its first appearance. In a notable speech on June 1, 1865, in the Prussian House of Representatives,

¹⁴⁶ Werther to Bismarck, May 27, tg. No. 181 (AGEV). There was no formal council held, hence Sybel IV, p. 288, Friedjung II, p. 580, and other accounts including Stern IX, p. 477 ("Mehrzahl seiner Minister") need correction. No one else seems to have been admitted to the secret in Vienna; the Biegeleben group picked up only vague rumors (Vogt p. 93); Mensdorff hinted at negotiations, to Bloomfield.

¹⁴⁷ For this sequel in Dresden, see Friesen II, p. 160; *Origines* X, pp. 11-12; Werner to Mensdorff, June 2, 1866, No. 66B *reservirt*.

¹⁴⁸ As these documents were accessible to Stern, reasons of time or space must have led him to omit their interesting evidence.

¹⁴⁹ Stern IX, pp. 475, 476.

of which he was an elected member, Anton von Gablenz called upon the Bismarck cabinet to propose a general settlement of outstanding differences with Austria: to renounce the annexation of Schleswig-Holstein in return for a reform of the federal military constitution which would divide the forces of Germany between the two powers approximately at the Main.¹⁵⁰ On this basis the two sovereigns could form a strong alliance and maintain the independence of the Fatherland from foreign interference.¹⁵¹ Here are the outlines of the later plan. One may well believe from this that Herr von Gablenz' mind had already worked out more details than he thought wise to present in public,—in short, that his plan was well developed by June 1865.

But Bismarck took no notice of it then, and the Gastein Convention brought a temporary breathing spell for both powers. Nevertheless, Anton persisted. He saw the need of a closer knowledge of *haute politique* before he could hope to persuade the chancelleries, and he determined to spend the autumn in Paris, making notes in that "capital of Europe." With introductions from his brother, he talked with Prince Metternich, Count Mülinen, and others, and did not return until the end of the year.¹⁵² As his plan meant in essence a greater sacrifice for Austria than for Prussia, he awaited the development of another tense situation before bringing it forward in Vienna.

¹⁵⁰ Prussia, Landtag, Haus der Abgeordneten: *Stenographische Berichte über die Verhandlungen*, 61st session, 1865, vol. III, pp. 1839-1862. For this valuable reference I am indebted to a hint in Ritter: *Die preussischen Konservativen* pp. 125 note 74.

¹⁵¹ Gablenz also suggested in his speech the partial remission of the war-expenses, and a compromise of economic interests. The idea of a division of military hegemony had, of course, been the basis of King William's proposals of 1859 and 1860 (see above, chapter i) and a cardinal tenet of Prussian military circles (cf. Manteuffel's letter to Bismarck, May 23, 1865: *Bismarck-Jahrbuch* IV, pp. 103-105. So also the idea of preventing foreign interference and imposing their will upon Europe (cf. Vogt p. 68 and note 3).

¹⁵² Letters of Ludwig von Gablenz to Count Mülinen, late September 1865, and to Anton's wife in Berlin, December 2, 1865 (HHS: *Nachlass Gablenz*).

In addition to this personal initiative, three other arguments for Anton's authorship may be cited. Latrille, who first published the plan from the Gablenz family papers, gives him the sole credit, relying on the recollections of members of the family, and on the absence of any sources to the contrary.¹⁵³ Moreover, Anton himself claimed authorship when Franz Joseph suspected Bismarck to be the prime mover.¹⁵⁴ It was Anton who toiled ceaselessly night and day, and who wrote to his brother with a sigh, "I am sometimes in despair and have probably undertaken much beyond my strength."¹⁵⁵ In the third place, we have records of the Austrian Gablenz' political ideas from September 1865 onward. While favoring a settlement of the Schleswig-Holstein question and the division of hegemony, in no case do his suggestions wholly coincide with his brother's program. Quite the contrary, for he seems to be more interested in finding some scheme by which Prussia shall annex the Duchies and compensate Austria, rather than renounce the Duchies and accept compensation from Austria.¹⁵⁶

While our sources are not decisive, yet they point to the conclusion that the main outlines of the Gablenz compromise, and probably its original provisions, were the work of Anton; that Ludwig threw himself behind the central ideal and later the concrete plan, and aided his brother to the fullest extent through his personal connections with Mensdorff, Esterhazy, and Manteuffel.

* * * * *

The second point on which more information is needed concerns the threat to France. Years later, Bismarck related

¹⁵³ Latrille, *loc. cit.* p. 438.

¹⁵⁴ Sybel IV, p. 284, from Anton's letter of May 25 to King William (HAA).

¹⁵⁵ Anton's note, on a memorandum of alterations in the plan, sent to Ludwig c. May 20 (HHS: *Nachlass Gablenz*). Similarly, remarks in Anton's Letter of May 10 to Ludwig (Appendix A, No. 18).

¹⁵⁶ For Ludwig von Gablenz' suggestions: Manteuffel to Bismarck, October 8 (HAA), October 11 (Appendix A, No. 11), December 12 *Vertraulich* (HAA); Gablenz' letters to Mensdorff, October 31, 1865, February 4, 1866.

the Gablenz episode with a fanfare at the end: he proposed to Gablenz that Austria and Prussia should join forces and turn against France, recapture Alsace, and make Strassburg a federal fortress with an Austrian garrison. Prussia would garrison Mainz. "If we were to bring these as a gift to the Germans they would accept our dualism."¹⁵⁷ Three times in after years Bismarck told of this astonishing proposal, and all three accounts are in accord.¹⁵⁸ Despite this fact, and the authority which Friedjung lent to the story, most writers, considering it an apochryphal invention of Bismarck's lively imagination, have refused to repeat it, since Sybel was silent on the matter.¹⁵⁹

No such definitely aggressive idea appears in any of the Prussian or Austrian documents. But our attention is arrested by certain remarks of Bismarck to Count Wimpffen, who was sent by Franz Joseph to Berlin after the war of 1866 to reopen relations with his victorious rival:

"I wish that we had shot the stag together," was Bismarck's expression. He had believed, he said, that there was a chance "in the last hour before the war, when he sent Baron Gablenz to Vienna. That moment seemed to him the most appropriate time to clasp each other's hand and with guns loaded to face in another direction."¹⁶⁰

This may or may not have meant aggression. At Schönbrunn in 1864, and earlier, Rechberg and Bismarck had spoken of a future war against France, whether provoked by them or by Napoleon.¹⁶¹ The formation of a compact bloc of all Germany and Austria, guaranteeing Austria's possession of Venetia, had often been designated by Napoleon as highly dis-

¹⁵⁷ Busch: *Bismarck, Some Secret Pages of his History* III, p. 87.

¹⁵⁸ In 1880 to Dr. Cohen (Brauer, Marcks, Müller: *Erinnerungen an Bismarck*, 4th edition, p. 322; *G. W.* VIII, p. 386); in 1883 to Busch (*Bismarck, Some Secret Pages* III, p. 87; *Tagebuchblätter* III, p. 139 f.; *Unser Reichskanzler* I, p. 422; *G. W.* VIII, p. 465); in 1890 to Friedjung (*Kampf* II, p. 580; *G. W.* IX, p. 50).

¹⁵⁹ For instance, Stern and Lenz. Brandenburg doubts its accuracy (*Reichsgründung* II, p. 149; *Untersuchungen* p. 518).

¹⁶⁰ " . . . mit den fertigen Rüstungen nach einer anderen Seite Front zu machen." (Wimpffen to Beust, Berlin, December 6, 1866, No. 15A).

¹⁶¹ See chapter iii above.

tasteful to him, and might well be considered by him as a cause for war. French opposition was probably in Anton's mind from the beginning.¹⁶² At least by May 1866, one of his strongest arguments for his plan was the danger that "a war between Austria and Prussia would . . . result in the seizure of the dictatorship of Europe by a Napoleonid who would give commands to the Houses of Habsburg and Hohenzollern, whereas these princely Houses by accepting this treaty plan could keep for themselves the dictatorial power in Europe."¹⁶³ The same ideal had long been held in Prussian military circles, especially by Edwin von Manteuffel, who was now half-initiated into the secret. Manteuffel composed a memorandum, inspired (so thought Ludwig von Gablenz) by the King himself.¹⁶⁴ In this document Manteuffel concluded with the pregnant sentence: "Should France object [to this settlement] then we will have a fine war and Austria has the prospect of Milan. . . ."¹⁶⁵ This is the most extreme form in which the anti-French *motif* seems to have been committed to paper.

Obviously Bismarck was not blind to the offensive possibilities in so sudden a reversal of the balance of power in favor of Germany. But did he contemplate the seizure of Alsace? There were advantages and disadvantages to his future program in letting Austria hold Strassburg. It might induce Austria to give up Venetia to Italy, an *acquit de conscience* on which Bismarck was determined to insist.¹⁶⁶ On the other hand, Bismarck cannot have wished to place any obstacles in the path of a future war against Austria to drive her from

¹⁶² But he spoke only of increasing Germany's "independence" by an increased defensive strength (*Stenographische Berichte* 1865, III, p. 1841).

¹⁶³ From undated memorandum explaining and advocating the Gablenz compromise (HHS, *Nachlass Gablenz*; a copy of this in HAA was available to Sybel). To Franz Joseph, Gablenz spoke of "revanche pour Villa Franca! und die revanche ware suss und sicher. . ." (Anton von Gablenz to King William, letter of May 25 from Vienna, HAA)

¹⁶⁴ Ludwig von Gablenz to Mensdorff, May 24, No. 66.

¹⁶⁵ Memorandum, Kiel, May 21, 1866, in Manteuffel's hand (HHS).

¹⁶⁶ On May 2, he promised Govone to resign if the King abandoned Italy (Govone: *Mémoires* pp. 474, 475).

Germany and complete the unification. The Gablenz plan in no way prevented such a development—it furthered it. He knew that Austria would be weakened, not strengthened, by attempting to dominate Bavaria, Baden, and Württemberg. But if Austria held Alsace, she could gain the alliance of a revengeful France by promising its return. Thus Bismarck might later have to face a combination of his enemies instead of fighting each individually. If this represents his reasoning, then either he cannot have mentioned Alsace seriously to Gablenz,¹⁶⁷ or he cannot have expected that Austria would accept the Gablenz overtures at all.¹⁶⁸

* * * * *

On the question of Bismarck's motives, there is the widest divergence among historians. Those who consider Bismarck's general policy toward Austria a peaceful and defensive one think that he was making a serious attempt at an understanding with Franz Joseph on the basis of dualism which he hoped would cement Austro-Prussian friendship.¹⁶⁹ Those who take the view that Bismarck from the beginning considered war with Austria almost an essential element in his program look upon this Gablenz episode as one of his expedients in promoting the war.¹⁷⁰ As usual, Bismarck's later remarks give support to both views. The secret documents shed new light on the question, but do not give a complete answer.

The chief argument for Bismarck's serious desire to have the scheme accepted is the fact that, busy as he was, he spent a great deal of time and energy working upon Anton's draft to make it into a suitable instrument. The article concerning

¹⁶⁷ There is not the slightest hint of it in any of Gablenz' papers, even the most private.

¹⁶⁸ If Austria accepted the plan, she would accept the idea of garrisoning Strassburg too, since it was geographically a part of South Germany, her allotted sphere. Bismarck said to Dr. Coben: "Luckily" Austria rejected the Gablenz Plan (*G.W.* VIII, p. 386).

¹⁶⁹ Sybel, Thimme; with less emphasis on solidarity, Bibl, Egelhaaf, Herre, and others.

¹⁷⁰ Stern, Brandenburg, Lenz, Marcks, Kralik, Delbrück, Luckwaldt, Keudell, and others. Friedjung's opinion seems to vary (compare I, p. 311 with p. 312).

the military arrangements was sent to Moltke for comment, and was ultimately expanded to ten times its former size.¹⁷¹ In the end, Bismarck had a treaty ready to sign at a moment's notice. But one should not deduce too much from this argument. It was characteristic of Bismarck to perfect a tool even if there might be only a remote possibility of its use for the purpose for which it seemed to be designed.¹⁷² Bismarck knew by this time that Austria could be driven out of Germany only by war. Since February, he had been moving heaven and earth to goad Austria into aggression, to make war. His greatest stumbling-block was still the King. If Austria rejected the present "compromise," which embodied the ambition of William's life-time, the effect would be to overcome the conscientious scruples of the King against a conflict, and to clinch his determination.¹⁷³ It presented an excellent last chance to show the King that Austria would never meet his "just" demands. This was the actual outcome a few weeks later: when Austria closed the negotiations, Bismarck denounced her, not only before William, but to the rest of Europe, as unconciliatory and desirous of war.¹⁷⁴

If Bismarck seriously wished Austria to accept the plan, why were his changes such as to make it more difficult of acceptance?¹⁷⁵ Why did he eliminate without exception the

¹⁷¹ *G. W. V.*, pp. 502-503; drafts with Moltke's and Bismarck's additions, in HAA.

¹⁷² For instance, in February 1865 he drew up a draft treaty between Prussia and Augustenburg on the basis of the February demands, though he could be fairly certain that Austria would reject them. In June 1865, he drafted a treaty with the Grand Duke of Oldenburg for the improbable contingency that Austria would accept him as ruler of the Duchies.

¹⁷³ Bismarck said to Gablenz: "Erst sollen Sie diese Vorschläge dem Könige vorlegen, und ist es dem Recht, so fliegen Sie als Friedenstaube! Gelingts nicht, so haben Sie zur Gewissensruhe und dem Entschlusse des Königs wertvoll beigetragen. Ich aber desavouire Sie." (Latrille, *loc. cit.* p. 440).

¹⁷⁴ Bismarck to Goltz, June 2 (*G. W. V.*, p. 521); Bismarck's circular of June 4 (*Ibid.* pp. 524-525). For the effect on the King, see his letter to Karl Alexander of Weimar, June 4 (Schultze II, pp. 77-78).

¹⁷⁵ For instance, he reduced Austria's compensation for Kiel from 10 to 5 million thalers, and he eliminated a sentence which was vital to Austria's honor: "The sovereignty of the Duchies may never be united with the Prussian crown."

alterations which Mensdorff introduced?¹⁷⁶ Moreover, he intended to insist on Austria's cession of Venetia, which would certainly have reduced the value of the alliance in Franz Joseph's eyes.¹⁷⁷ When Bismarck was questioned about the negotiations by someone who suspected them, he replied that their purpose was to compromise Austria before the *Mittelstaaten*!¹⁷⁸ Were such remarks calculated to strengthen Franz Joseph's confidence and enthusiasm for the good cause?

But if Bismarck did nothing to make a difficult decision easier for Austria, why did he take so much pains with the drafts and the negotiations? Obviously because William took them very seriously; like so much that Bismarck said and did and wrote during these years, this playlet was revised and performed chiefly for the benefit of the King. But it might well serve other purposes. What expedient of Bismarck's was ever single-barrelled? Careful workman that he was, he wanted to have it perfected also on the remote chance that Austria *would* accept it, if not now, perhaps on the brink of war.¹⁷⁹ If Napoleon proved treacherous, Bismarck could alter it a little and keep Austria from joining France. It was no accident that Bismarck's interest in Gablenz' proposals increased at the time when Napoleon seemed to escape from him, and the congress began to loom in the background. When Austria took the plan into earnest consideration, Bismarck saw that a tentative agreement might be of advantage to him behind the scenes at the congress, either as a *Rückendeckung*

¹⁷⁶ See below in this chapter.

¹⁷⁷ Bismarck to William, May 2 (Kohl: *Anhang* I, p. 143); Bismarck to Goltz, May 18 (*G. W. V.*, p. 502); instructions for the Prussian envoy at the Paris congress, June 4 (HAA). Cf. Lenz p. 301; Brandenburg: *Untersuchungen* p. 519.

¹⁷⁸ Werner to Mensdorff, Dresden, May 15, tg.: "Ein vertraulicher Bericht des G[ra]fen Hohenthal von gestern, den ich einsah, spricht von Verhandlungen, die *insgeheim* zwischen Oesterreich und Preussen in der Herzogtümerfrage gepflogen würden; G[ra]f Bismarck, darüber befragt, soll geäußert haben, sie fänden nur statt um Oesterreich gegenüber den Mittelstaaten zu compromittiren. . . ."

¹⁷⁹ Karolyi to Mensdorff, May 26, No. 44A; Bismarck to Goltz, May 18 (*G. W. V.*, p. 502).

against Napoleon's pressure for Rhine territory, or as an incriminating document, a sort of "Benedetti treaty," with which to compromise and isolate Austria there. Without revealing this last alternative, however, Bismarck on May 25 suggested to Count Karolyi (whom he had not addressed for days) that the three armed powers, Prussia, Austria, and Italy,—in opposition to the three neutral powers which were sponsoring the congress,—should exchange views upon a common attitude. To carry this out, he urged Mensdorff to "appear in Paris with the most extensive powers for concluding an agreement with Prussia."¹⁸⁰ The method of procedure to be adopted was naively outlined by Gablenz to Franz Joseph in his last audience: "Your Majesty will presently send a representative to the congress, at the same time conclude the treaty with Prussia in Kiel and quickly ratify it."¹⁸¹ As soon as the Venetian question is brought up at the congress, Your Majesty's envoy will leave the conference and Your Majesty will reply with the ratified treaty. Napoleon of course will be surprised when the sword of justice is taken from him—but history will label the Treaty of Kiel with the motto: revenge for Villa Franca! and revenge will be sweet and sure, for behind the Kiel Treaty will stand a million soldiers."¹⁸²

Toward the same object, Austro-Prussian solidarity at the congress, King William was intending to work upon Austria

¹⁸⁰ Karolyi to Mensdorff, May 26, 1866, No. 44A; Bloomfield to Clarendon, May 29, tg. and despatch No. 300 (F. O. 7 Austria 707). As Karolyi was not admitted to the secret of the Gablenz negotiations, he did not understand the import of Bismarck's proposal. Bismarck hinted that Mensdorff should leave Biegeleben behind (Karolyi to Mensdorff, letter of May 26).

¹⁸¹ When the Grand Duke of Weimar refused to sponsor the Gablenz plan, it was suggested that General Manteuffel and Ludwig von Gablenz be authorized to conclude it in Kiel (Sybel IV, pp. 282-283). For the interesting negotiations between the two governors, see R. Lorenz: "Gablenz in Holstein," *loc. cit.* pp. 185-188.

¹⁸² Anton von Gablenz to King William, Vienna, May [25], 1866 (HAA). This letter was used by Sybel (IV, pp. 283-284), but the present passage was not included in his narrative.

through King Johann of Saxony.¹⁸³ Thus the statesman on the Spree adopted the Gablenz compromise as a multi-barrelled expedient in his infinitely complex *Politik*.

* * * * *

What reception was given to the zealous mediator and to his treaty on the Danube? Count Esterhazy and Mensdorff saw advantages in keeping open the friendly discussions with Berlin. Gablenz was received with courtesy and had repeated interviews with both ministers, and twice with Franz Joseph himself. The attitude of the Emperor and his confidants was one of readiness to explore possibilities, but of suspicion toward Bismarck. To safeguard Austria's interests, and to keep the ball rolling, they made objections and suggested improvements, some of which were fundamental: the plan must have regard for Austria's honor; it must take account of the federal point of view; Austria must gain security against Italy; and, finally, Austria would take no initiative in proposing the compromise in public.¹⁸⁴

The point of honor Anton tried to meet by stipulating that the Duchies should never be united to the Prussian crown (a demand to which Bismarck objected), and by adding the delectable provision that Austria would be compensated with the cession of the Hohenzollern principalities (which Bismarck later deleted).¹⁸⁵ For security against Italy, Austria would be given a guarantee of federal aid if France joined Italy. This was confided to a secret article, to which Bismarck at first gave his consent, then weakened, then eliminated entirely. But the most vital necessity in the minds of the Vienna statesmen was to bring the plan within the frame-

¹⁸³ "Bemerkungen zu einem Brief des Königs von Sachsen an den Grossherzog von Baden," May 24, 1866 (HAA).

¹⁸⁴ Anton to Ludwig von Gablenz, letter of May 10 (Appendix A, No. 18). These hitherto unknown demands will be dealt with more fully in an article reappraising the entire Gablenz episode in detail.

¹⁸⁵ The authority for these and the following statements is to be found in various manuscript memoranda in the hand of Anton von Gablenz, among his brother's papers in HHS, especially Anton's letter of May 10 (Appendix A, No. 18).

work of the federal pact, and to eliminate the element of coercion of the German states. This, of course, struck at the heart of the project. They suspected that one of Bismarck's objects in backing Gablenz was to separate Austria from the *Mittelstaaten*, whose hard-won cooperation the *Ballplatz* was determined not to lose.¹⁸⁶ To block such a manoeuvre and to protect their bridges behind them, Mensdorff constantly stressed the necessity of winning the support of the lesser states for the plan.¹⁸⁷ And Esterhazy adroitly suggested that Gablenz persuade Bavaria to take the initiative of officially proposing the compromise in Berlin and Vienna.¹⁸⁸ This did not appeal to the Prussians at all.

Austria's chief objection, then, was not met. Nor were her "honor and interests" really safeguarded. If she gained a point as to the Duchies, Prussia gained more: Augustenburg was out of the picture, and they became a Prussian appanage. Austria gave up her proudest possession, the hegemony of Germany, and got no additional security in return. Prussia would be her ally in word alone, not in deed. Moreover, the Austrians knew well,—and Bismarck knew well,—that to dominate the Wittelsbachs would be the devil's own task, far harder than to tame the states north of the Main.¹⁸⁹ Dearly as Franz Joseph longed for an accord with Prussia against the "revolution," he saw that by the present compact Prussia got "the lion's share."¹⁹⁰

In the last analysis, the Emperor could not trust Bismarck.¹⁹¹ As Belcredi later wrote, by such a pact Austria would have given up the last friends she had, and surrendered herself entirely to Bismarck's good graces. Forced to add the

¹⁸⁶ Werther to Bismarck, May 5, tg. No. 140 (AGEV); Werner to Mensdorff, May 15, tg.; Bloomfield to Clarendon, May 8, No. 236 (F.O. 7 Austria 706), May 24, No. 284 Confidential (F.O. 7 Austria 707).

¹⁸⁷ Werther to Bismarck, May 10, No. 147 (HAA), May 16, No. 160 (PGS), May 16, No. 163 (HAA).

¹⁸⁸ Werther to Bismarck, May 10, No. 145 *Geheim* (HAA).

¹⁸⁹ Werther to Bismarck, May 8, tg. No. 142 (AGEV).

¹⁹⁰ Sybel IV, p. 284, from Anton Gablenz' letter to William, May 25 (HAA).

¹⁹¹ *Ibid.*

burden of the domination of South Germany to her otherwise far too large political task, her power of resistance against the Hungarians would have been seriously weakened.¹⁹² She could expect revolutions everywhere.¹⁹³ Franz Joseph was therefore wise not to accept the Gablenz-Bismarck treaty.

But the Emperor need not have rejected it so openly. A cleverer diplomacy would have dictated further dragging out of the negotiations. There were more questions left hanging than were settled: the parliament proposal,¹⁹⁴ the presidency, the *Zollverein*,¹⁹⁵ etc. Actually Bismarck's freedom was as restricted by his treaty with Italy, of whose existence Austria was now fairly certain, as the *Hofburg* was morally bound to defend the German states. Probably Mensdorff and Esterhazy did not take the negotiations quite seriously.¹⁹⁶ They strung them out in order to keep Bismarck from attacking before the Austrian forces were ready.¹⁹⁷ Probably they would have continued them longer if the congress invitation had not precipitated a decision in the Schleswig-Holstein question at this moment. As it was, Mensdorff tried to cushion the rejection by further insistence upon the voluntary assent of the secondary states.¹⁹⁸ Yielding to a suggestion

¹⁹² "Fragmente aus dem Nachlasse des ehemaligen Staatsministers Richard Graf Belcredi," in *Die Kultur*, 1906, p. 21.

¹⁹³ Lenz p. 308.

¹⁹⁴ Manteuffel's memorandum of May 21 (HAA) said it would be called, but rendered harmless by Austro-Prussian unity.

¹⁹⁵ Cf. Brandenburg: *Untersuchungen* p. 518.

¹⁹⁶ This seems evident from the sum total of their remarks to Werther, Gablenz, and Lord Bloomfield during the episode. "Count Bismarck's plans," Mensdorff confided to the British ambassador, "have been too long and too deeply laid to admit of sufficient modification at the last moment . . . to be reconcilable with the interests of the Austrian Empire." (Bloomfield to Clarendon, May 12, No. 249. F.O. 7 Austria 706). Cf. Belcredi, *loc. cit.* p. 21, on Esterhazy.

¹⁹⁷ Mensdorff suspected that this too was an object of Bismarck's (Bloomfield to Clarendon, May 14, No. 253. F.O. 7 Austria 706).

¹⁹⁸ Werther to Bismarck, May 27, tg. No. 181 (AGEV).

of Gablenz, which bore traces of Berlin authorship,¹⁹⁹ the Austrian foreign minister wrote the unofficial envoy a letter, regretting "that the tense situation does not admit of direct negotiations."²⁰⁰ He hoped, however, "that it will be possible for both governments still to find points of contact toward an understanding."²⁰¹ Despite these phrases, the rupture was only too obvious; and the unguardedly frivolous and warlike remarks of certain Austrian ministers,²⁰² the reports of which Gablenz brought back to Berlin with Mensdorff's letter, gave Bismarck ample return for his efforts.²⁰³ Franz Joseph appeared to have broken the last bond between himself and the King.

THE CONGRESS AND THE FRENCH ALLIANCE

Meanwhile as large a cloud as that of the impending war had arisen on Austria's horizon. The invitations to a congress at Paris were about to be delivered. With bitter memories of the congress in 1856, and the unpleasant consequences of rejection in 1859 and 1863, the *Ballplatz* was tossed between acceptance and abstention, as also between the prospects of being forced to cede Venetia with little or no compensation, or ruining her favored position in the opinion of Europe.²⁰⁴

¹⁹⁹ Gablenz to Mensdorff, letter of May 28 (HHS: *Nachlass Rechberg*). Gablenz wanted a letter which he could show in Dresden also, but seemingly Mensdorff's letter did not fulfil this wish.

²⁰⁰ This letter does not exist either in HHS or in HAA, but is summarized in Werther to Bismarck, May 29, tg. No. 183 (AGEV). Stern's doubt as to whether Mensdorff did write such a letter (IX, p. 477) shows that he did not investigate Werther's reports for the Gablenz negotiations.

²⁰¹ Werther to Bismarck, May 29, tg. No. 183 (AGEV).

²⁰² Sybel IV, p. 288; *G. W. V.*, p. 521.

²⁰³ Bismarck spread these remarks, and a tendentious tale of the negotiations, all over Europe (*G. W. V.*, pp. 521, 525), and even King William did not hesitate to use them against Austria (letter to Duke of Weimar, June 4: Schultze II, p. 77).

²⁰⁴ Mensdorff to Metternich, April 29, tg.; Mensdorff to Metternich, Ap-ponyi, and Reverteira, June 1, No. 2. Kulessa pp. 53-56 has a good summary of Austria's negotiations and policy toward the congress, but he should be corrected on p. 55: no council was held on May 30. The final decision was taken by Franz Joseph on May 30 or 31, probably after consultation with Esterhazy and Belcredi (see below).

If Mensdorff had acted promptly in early May to secure the help of England and Russia in nipping the congress in the bud, he might easily have succeeded. Clarendon and Gortchakov were unusually sympathetic with Austria's position, exasperated with Bismarck, and reluctant to heed Napoleon's call.²⁰⁵ A determined statement from Mensdorff in London and St. Petersburg that he would *not* attend a congress because Austria could never discuss Venetia in public would probably have decided those courts not to give Napoleon the satisfaction of forcing Austria into a corner. But this statement was not made,—presumably because Mensdorff, and Metternich, feared to incur the displeasure of the French Emperor, from whom they were asking an alliance.

The Austrians had tried instead to dissuade Napoleon by using every possible argument against the congress.²⁰⁶ Metternich did not mince words on the subject in Paris. "The congress," he said, "is the first act of hostility against Austria, not by Prussia nor Italy, but by a coalition which might become European."²⁰⁷ But failing to stop the juggernaut, which a public desire for peace was propelling inexorably onward, Metternich tried then to reach an agreement with the French as a basis for the deliberations. This too was in vain.²⁰⁸ In despair, he concluded somewhat tardily, "The Emperor wants to induce us at all costs to yield Venice, and expects to get it either through the war or by means of the congress."²⁰⁹

By this time the *Ballplatz* had become alarmed. Friends on many sides, Beust, Clarendon, Drouyn de Lhuys, were now

²⁰⁵ For Russia, Kulessa p. 44; Charles-Roux: *Alexandre II, Gortchakoff, et Napoléon III*, pp. 378-379; *Origines* VIII, pp. 459-460; and chapter x above. For England, Ramsay p. 183; *Origines* VIII, pp. 439-442; Cowley to Clarendon, May 1, No. 553 Secret and Confidential (F.O. 27 France 1616); and chapter x above. Clarendon preferred a combined appeal to the armed powers; Gortchakov preferred to continue the Tsar's personal mediation.

²⁰⁶ Metternich to Mensdorff, May 14, tg.

²⁰⁷ Metternich to Mensdorff, May 23, No. 28B (Oncken I, pp. 227-228).

²⁰⁸ Metternich to Mensdorff, letter of May 21 (Oncken I, pp. 218-221).

²⁰⁹ Metternich to Mensdorff, May 23, No. 28B (Oncken I, p. 230).

urging Austria for her own best interests to accept, if only to gain time, or to prevent Prussia from reaping a moral victory.²¹⁰ Bismarck and Italy sent in their acceptances. Mensdorff had vaguely indicated to the British from the beginning that Austria would not reject the congress, but he had not promised an unconditional acceptance.²¹¹ In Paris, he had warned that Austria could not admit the Venetian question as a basis of discussion.²¹² On May 25, he said the same to London and St. Petersburg, and insisted that the congress settle first the question of the Duchies, the real cause for the strife in Europe. Only if that were satisfactorily adjusted, Austria might admit a discussion of the Italian situation.²¹³ This protest came too late to affect the invitations, and Napoleon paid no attention to it. As a result, on May 30, Mensdorff was still confronted with the original dilemma.

What happened in the *Ballplatz* has been variously reported. It has been stated that Mensdorff himself favored acceptance, in order to gain time for further armaments.²¹⁴ But the Count in his *apologia* combats this very argument and defends his final rejection of the congress.²¹⁵ It has also been said that the foreign minister ordered his *Referent*, Baron Aldenburg, to draft an unreserved acceptance,²¹⁶ and that Esterhazy forced a change, and secured the Emperor's support for reservations. A somewhat different story emerges

²¹⁰ Werner to Mensdorff, May 21, No. 59, May 23, No. 60, May 26, No. 62; Apponyi to Mensdorff, May 16, No. 36; memorandum of Drouyn de Lhuys, May 21 (sketch of procedure at the congress), HHS.

²¹¹ Bloomfield to Clarendon, May 8, No. 236; May 23, No. 272 Confidential; May 26, No. 290; May 28, No. 292 (all from F.O. 7 Austria 707). The last despatch contains Mensdorff's positive assurance.

²¹² Mensdorff to Metternich, May 23, tg.

²¹³ Mensdorff to Metternich, Apponyi, and Revertera, May 25 (*Origines* IX, pp. 266-268).

²¹⁴ Stern IX, p. 478, relying on Plener I, p. 80, and Wertheimer: "Zwei ungedruckte Denkschriften des oesterreichischen Ministers Graf Mensdorff über das Jahr 1866," in *Preussische Jahrbücher* CLXXX, 1920, p. 339. But Wertheimer's evidence is the exact opposite of Plener's!

²¹⁵ Wertheimer, *loc. cit.* p. 339.

²¹⁶ Plener I, p. 78 f.

from the reports of the British ambassador. On May 30, Lord Bloomfield inquired what form the Austrian reply would take. "It would contain," said Mensdorff, "a declaration that Austria did not seek any territorial aggrandizement or increase of power, and that She trusted the other states would be disposed to make declarations in the same sense. The Roman question would be alluded to," he added.²¹⁷ The Emperor's approval was to be sought the following morning. Lord Bloomfield expressed the fear that this reply would not aid the conference and indicated Austria's intention not to attend. Mensdorff replied merely that he was ready to set out for Paris, but would not do so "until he heard further."²¹⁸ From this it is clear that the first *unamended* draft contained sufficient reservations to endanger the congress.

During the afternoon, or the next morning, Franz Joseph went over the draft and tightened the reservations.²¹⁹ He held no formal council on the subject,²²⁰ but was probably influenced by Esterhazy to make the changes.²²¹ He felt that Austria's position would be worse if he accepted the congress and then broke it up than if he stayed away altogether.²²² To cede Venetia in the face of European pressure would be "suicide," to sell it would be dishonorable, to exchange it for adequate compensation impossible without war.²²³ The Aus-

²¹⁷ Bloomfield to Clarendon, May 31, No. 305 (F.O. 7 Austria 707). To Baron Werther, Mensdorff spoke of Austria's "acceptance with reservations" (Werther to Bismarck, May 30, tg. No. 185, 2 p.m., PGS).

²¹⁸ Bloomfield to Clarendon, May 31, No. 305 (F.O. 7 Austria 707). Mensdorff's disinclination to attend the congress in person was lessened by Bismarck's message through Karolyi to the effect that "there is a better chance of their coming to an understanding at Paris than elsewhere." (Bloomfield to Clarendon, May 29, tg. and No. 300. F.O. 7 Austria 707).

²¹⁹ Bloomfield to Clarendon, May 31, tg. and No. 306, 6:15 p.m. (F.O. 7 Austria 707); Mosbourg to Drouyn, tg. May 31, and despatch of June 1 (*Origines* IX, pp. 326, 358 ff.)

²²⁰ No protocol exists, and none is missing. The incorrect assertion in Ollivier VIII, p. 159 (an extraordinary council of five hours' length!), and Kulessa p. 55, may have come from Mosbourg (cf. *Origines* IX, p. 326).

²²¹ Beust: *Aus drei Vierteljahrhunderten* II, p. 16, as corroboration of Plener.

²²² *Origines* IX, p. 360.

²²³ Mensdorff to Metternich, Apponyi, and Revertera, June 1, No. 2.

trians wished now to kill the congress. As a sop to Catholic opinion, they expressed regret that the Pope was not invited; Mensdorff had "no intention of pressing the subject farther."²²⁴

Early in the afternoon of May 31, telegrams were despatched to the three neutral courts saying that Austria accepted the invitation on condition that all powers should renounce any territorial gains at the conference.²²⁵ Meanwhile Baron Aldenburg redrafted the official reply, which went off the following day.²²⁶ It was hoped that the congress bugaboo had thus received the *coup de grâce*; but Mensdorff continued his travelling plans.²²⁷ Failing to induce Esterhazy to accompany him, he called Count Blome from Munich.²²⁸ The ambitious envoy at once obeyed the call, and though the congress was soon buried, he remained a week in Vienna to spur the Emperor and Mensdorff into the inevitable war.

The backwardness of the military preparations of Austria, and especially of the German states, should have induced Franz Joseph to attend the congress, once he had failed to destroy it at the beginning. Austria would have lost nothing by attending, and she would have gained two or three precious weeks for complete mobilization. Moreover, she might have forced Bismarck to assume the odium of breaking up the conference, for he was worried at the approaching expiration of his alliance with Italy, and the opportunity for his foes to complete their preparations,—so worried that he contemplated the possible necessity for withdrawing from the con-

²²⁴ Mensdorff's remark (Bloomfield to Clarendon, June 2, No. 314 Confidential. F.O. 7 Austria 707).

²²⁵ Mensdorff to Metternich, Apponyi, and Revertera, May 31, tg. 2:50 p.m. Cf. *Origines* IX, p. 336.

²²⁶ Mensdorff to Metternich, Apponyi, and Revertera, June 1, No. 1 (*Staatsarchiv* XI, pp. 47-49). The redrafting had been completed on May 31 (Mensdorff to Metternich, June 1, No. 5. Oncken I, p. 248).

²²⁷ Bloomfield to Clarendon, May 31, tg. and No. 306, 6:15 p.m. (F.O. 7 Austria 707). Cf. *Origines* IX, p. 342.

²²⁸ Bloomfield to Clarendon, May 28, No. 292 (F.O. 7 Austria 707), letter of May 29 (F. O. 356 Bloomfield Papers 39); Mensdorff to Blome, May 31, tg.

ference himself.²²⁹ But Franz Joseph was willing to pay the price to preserve Austria's "honor and dignity".

For a few days the monarch had to face a barrage of angry criticism from almost all European countries. The weak-kneed leaders of the secondary states howled against Austria, the peace-breaker. Pfordten, who had been elected delegate to the congress by the Diet, now had an additional grievance against the *Ballplatz*. Clarendon was outspoken in denunciation, and Alexander frowned. Yet second thought recalled the harassing provocations of Bismarck; and Austria lost little permanent respect by her action.²³⁰ Napoleon growled in public,—but in reality he was not disappointed, for his trap had worked, and now it could be discarded. A chastened Austria was pressing again for his alliance. Franz Joseph preferred to accept his harsh terms in private, rather than before the areopagus of Europe.

* * * * *

At the moment when Mensdorff sent Metternich the refusal of the congress in the form of an acceptance, he had ordered his ambassador to renew his confidential conversations toward an understanding with France "in case of war."²³¹ This, he hoped, would mollify Caesar, as also the hint that after a war the congress might prove more successful.²³² As the previous negotiation had shattered upon Napoleon's inability to guarantee Italian neutrality, and reluctance to bind himself before war was inevitable, Mensdorff now tacitly dropped the former condition, and he showed that Austria's move toward Frankfurt would probably bring war.²³³ Latterly, Napoleon in conversations with Metternich had hinted at other condi-

²²⁹ This is evident from Bismarck's "Instructions for the Prussian delegate to the Paris congress," June 4, 1866 (HAA; not published by Thimme).

²³⁰ Alexander soon came to appreciate Austria's stand (Mensdorff to Varnbüler, letter of June 13), and so did the British (cf. Lord Russell's words, in Vitzthum p. 191).

²³¹ Mensdorff to Metternich, May 31 tg., June 1 tg. and No. 3 *réserve* (Oncken I, pp. 247-248).

²³² Mensdorff to Metternich, June 1 tg.

²³³ Mensdorff to Metternich, June 1, No. 5 (Oncken I, pp. 248-249).

tions as his price for an *entente*. "Could you promise . . . a cession of Venetia whether you whip the Italians or not?"²³⁴ He could not permit the restoration of the dispossessed princes, nor could he guarantee to restore all the papal lands.²³⁵

Faced with these counter-proposals, Mensdorff went part way to meet them. He promised that Austria would not retain any territory she might occupy in the course of the war in Italy, and she would not attempt to restore the former rulers. But he expected France not to oppose spontaneous popular movements directed against Italian unity.²³⁶ With new instructions along these lines, Metternich appeared at the Tuileries on June 3, and had one of the most memorable of all his audiences with the third Napoleon.²³⁷ After handing Mensdorff's despatches to the Emperor to read, the prince took from his pocket a piece of paper on which he had sketched Austria's terms. "These are, in my opinion, the maximum of our concessions," he said. Napoleon perused the despatches and the terms. "This is good," he replied finally, "because it gives me confidence, but it is not all. . . . We must frankly discuss the Venetian question, for without its solution, at least in prospect, we cannot reach an understanding." So saying, he took from a drawer of his desk a "*petit projet bien court et bien simple*" and submitted it to the ambassador. It offered French neutrality on two conditions, the cession of Venetia after the war *under all circumstances*, and the promise not to make territorial changes without French consent, if the balance of power in Germany were

²³⁴ Metternich to Mensdorff, May 23, No. 28B (Oncken I, p. 230).

²³⁵ Metternich to Mensdorff, May 29, No. 29B (Oncken I, pp. 238-239).

²³⁶ Mensdorff to Metternich, June 1, No. 5 (Oncken I, pp. 248-249). The Austrians were subventioning an uprising in Naples (protocol of the council of May 14, 1866; cf. Pietro C. Ulloa: *Un re in esilio, la corte di Francesco II a Roma dal 1861 al 1870* [Bari 1928] pp. 135-136).

²³⁷ Reported in Metternich to Mensdorff, June 6, No. 30B (Oncken I, pp. 250-254).

threatened.²³⁸ "If you accept what I propose," said the Emperor, "nothing will embroil us any more; if you think you must refuse, I shall be forced to arm and eventually to intervene."²³⁹ Metternich protested the severity of these terms. "Your Majesty holds the knife at our throat," he said. Though the audience ended on a more personal and friendly note, the hard reality of Napoleon's demands was only too evident.

The next day, the Emperor summoned his foreign minister and the Duke of Gramont, who had come to Paris a fortnight before ostensibly on a family affair;²⁴⁰ he charged the latter to begin negotiations in Vienna, in the greatest secrecy, on the basis of the "*petit projet*."²⁴¹ Austria had already lowered her demands regarding the Italian peninsula, and she was willing to make concessions on the future arrangements of Germany. But the crux of the matter was Venetia. If Franz Joseph agreed to cede it *under all circumstances*, he was recognizing the principle of nationality. This he could not do, and he therefore refused to assent to the cession unless he obtained "equivalent territorial compensation" in Germany.²⁴² Gramont supported this Austrian demand.²⁴³ But even if Austria won the war, she might not succeed in taking a province from Prussia. Then Napoleon's dream would still remain unrealized. This the French Emperor could not face. Drouyn wired that the text could not be altered in the Aus-

²³⁸ Text in *Origines* X, p. 27. Stern IX, p. 482, erroneously states that Gramont and Drouyn gained Napoleon for the treaty on June 4. But Napoleon had already shown the draft to Metternich on June 3, and had suggested its main idea to Metternich before Gramont had reached Paris (see above).

²³⁹ Metternich to Mensdorff, June 6, No. 30B (Oncken I, pp. 250-254).

²⁴⁰ Gramont had left Vienna on May 24 (*Origines* IX, p. 264) to attend a wedding in the family (Bloomfield to Clarendon, letter of May 25. F.O. 356 Bloomfield Papers 39).

²⁴¹ *Origines* X, pp. 26-27. The negotiations have left little trace in the Vienna archives, and can be followed only in the *Origines* X, pp. 26-260 *passim*, especially pp. 110-114, 143-146.

²⁴² *Origines* X, p. 112.

²⁴³ *Origines* X, p. 113.

trian sense.²⁴⁴ The Ballplatz was confronted with the alternative of getting no treaty. Would Napoleon make war to obtain Venetia, if Austria refused to sign? Franz Joseph thought so, and called his council to arrive at a final decision.

The Emperor opened this momentous, lugubrious session of June 11 with a warning to maintain the strictest secrecy concerning the discussions.²⁴⁵ After a sketchy summary of the negotiations, he came to the heart of the matter. Gramont, he said, had orders to declare that Napoleon preferred an understanding with Austria, but if this were not possible, he would turn to Prussia. "Prussia had offered him for such an occasion the cession of the Rhine provinces, and it needed only his simple acceptance to close the deal with Berlin ²⁴⁶ — the result would be his active entrance into the war with his entire forces. Between Prussia and Italy there existed a mutually binding treaty with a duration till July 8; and negotiations for its prolongation were in progress between the two governments. Under these circumstances, with the pistol at our breast, there seemed no other choice but to enter the negotiations. . . ." Franz Joseph then asked Mensdorff to read the various changes in the treaty drafts, ending with the final (French) version of article 2, but omitting all mention of compensations.

During the discussion which followed, no one seemed to question Prussia's supposed offer of the Rhine provinces. An abject fear of Napoleon's power was manifest, however, among all but Esterhazy. The little count had the temerity to question whether Napoleon's pistol was really loaded. He pointed out that article 2 was so loosely worded that a quite different interpretation was permissible. By this remark he can only have meant that Austria might escape the obligation to cede Venetia, even if fortune favored her arms in Germany.

²⁴⁴ *Origines* X, pp. 108-109.

²⁴⁵ Protocol of the council of June 11, 1866 (HHS; printed in Redlich II, pp. 804-808). Cf. Stern IX, pp. 484-485.

²⁴⁶ Gramont had made such statements to the Austrians in February (Mey-senbug to Mensdorff, February 22, letter), and probably repeated them now.

All were conscious of the tremendous cost of the alliance, but none opposed its conclusion. To reject it, and to drive Napoleon into the camp of Austria's two bitter enemies would be "more than daring," in the Emperor's judgment. He concluded with an expression of regret for the soldiers who would have to fight in vain for Venetia.

On the following day, Mensdorff and Gramont signed the "secret convention between France and Austria," as it was called.²⁴⁷ They signed also a "*note additionnelle*," having the same force as the treaty,²⁴⁸ and a "*note explicative*."²⁴⁹ In the former were interred most of the minor demands among Mensdorff's first proposals, now weakened to impotence.²⁵⁰ But there were more important matters, too. France agreed to sanction any increase of Austrian territory conquered in Germany "provided it is not of a nature to disturb the European balance by establishing an Austrian hegemony which would unite Germany under a single authority." Whether this would bar a revival of the *Fürstentag* project was not clear. Finally, Austria might demand non-Italian lands for the dispossessed Habsburg princes.

In conversation with Gramont, Franz Joseph indicated that Austria expected Silesia for herself, and an unspecified increase of territory for Saxony, Würtemberg, "and even Bavaria."²⁵¹ In return, he would not oppose the formation of a "new independent German state" out of the Rhine provinces.²⁵² He wanted a German crown for the ex-Grand

²⁴⁷ French copy in *Origines* X, p. 258; identical Austrian copy in Oncken I, pp. 265-266.

²⁴⁸ French copy in *Origines* X, pp. 259-260; identical Austrian copy in Oncken I, pp. 266-267.

²⁴⁹ French copy in *Origines* X, p. 260.

²⁵⁰ Restoration of former papal territories; neutralization of Venice's harbor; permissibility of uprisings against Italian unity; Venetian share of Austrian debt; indemnity for fortresses.

²⁵¹ *Origines* X, pp. 112, 145. In council of June 11, Franz Joseph had omitted Bavaria from the list of beneficiaries (Redlich II, p. 808).

²⁵² *Origines* X, p. 145. Franz Joseph did not mention the Rhine state in council.

Duke of Tuscany, but his other relatives could go begging.²⁵³ Finally, he agreed—still orally only—to reach an understanding with France “on the results of all territorial changes,”²⁵⁴ whatever that might mean.

Such was the pitiful outcome of years of effort on Metternich's part to bring Austria and France together. It bore the earmarks of mistrust, not friendship. And its guilty secret was guarded for many years. No government has been more severely criticised for concluding a treaty than Austria for subscribing to this one.²⁵⁵ Yet few were the mortal men in June 1866 who would not have done the same. The almost miraculous and kaleidoscopic changes caused by the war of that summer have so utterly altered the picture that it is extremely difficult to think oneself back into the pre-1866 situation.

Some of the criticism is hardly deserved. It has been pointed out that most of the stipulations turned out to be nothing but pious hopes for Austria.²⁵⁶ Esterhazy has been accused of paying dearly to restore the papal territories.²⁵⁷ But by May and June these objects had become secondary, or less. They were not even mentioned in the protocol of the council, which would surely have reported all that the ministers considered advantages in the treaty.²⁵⁸ What the Emperor and Mensdorff and Esterhazy wanted, now that Italy's neutrality was impossible to obtain,²⁵⁹ was the neutrality of France. All else mattered little. For that alone, they were willing to sacrifice all else,—the Pope, the Habsburg princes, and even Venetia. The mistakes had been made earlier; they were paying now.

Did Austria pay too high a price for the neutrality of France? The leading historians answer yes, Napoleon in-

²⁵³ *Origines* X, p. 146

²⁵⁴ *Origines* X, p. 145

²⁵⁵ Ollivier: *L'Empire libéral* VIII, pp. 184-185; Stern IX, p. 486, Friedjung I, pp. 322-324; Sybel IV, pp. 300-302.

²⁵⁶ Ollivier VIII, p. 185; Stern IX, p. 486.

²⁵⁷ Friedjung I, pp. 322-323.

²⁵⁸ Redlich II, pp. 804-808.

²⁵⁹ They found this out finally on June 7 (*Origines* X, p. 110).

tended to remain neutral in any case.²⁶⁰ But if one peruses carefully all the reports of Metternich and Lord Cowley from Paris during May, one gets a new impression of the intense and tremendously earnest determination of Napoleon not to allow this crisis to pass without securing Venetia — by the congress, or by the war, through Austria, or against her. The ambassadors of England, Prussia, Austria, and Italy, all anticipated active intervention.²⁶¹ Though Napoleon expected that Austria would eventually win the victory over her two enemies,²⁶² yet a few French divisions could easily have turned the scale against Franz Joseph. Neither England nor Russia would come to Austria's aid, that was certain.²⁶³ The risks of a three-against-one war would have been less than the risks of armed mediation. It is true that French public opinion was hostile to the Prussians and Italians, but there was a strong party at court seeking to promote a triple alliance between these states and France. If Austria had refused to promise Venetia except for equal compensation, as Mensdorff and Esterhazy wished to stipulate, then after the first victory, Austria might hold out her hand to Prussia, retain her Italian province, and thumb her nose at France. The temptation for Napoleon to fight against Franz Joseph was therefore great. He had always reserved the right to intervene later in the struggle; his own foreign minister, many of his intimates, and nearly all contemporaries thought he would. Was Franz Joseph, then, as misguided as has been hitherto supposed?

²⁶⁰ Ollivier, Friedjung, Stern, Brandenburg, and others.

²⁶¹ Cowley's opinion "If peace is not preserved, it will not be long before His Majesty is in the field with Italy." (tg. to Clarendon, May 11. F.O. 27 France 1616). Goltz and Nigra were hopeful of obtaining the French alliance.

²⁶² Max von Szczepanski "Napoleon III. und sein Heer," in *Heidelberger Abhandlungen zur mitlteren und neueren Geschichte* XLII, 1913, p. 138; Metternich to Mensdorff, letter of April 14, Fleury: *Memoirs of the Empress Eugénie* II, pp. 154, 176 (Napoleon's words).

²⁶³ England would enter the war only if Belgium were threatened (memorandum of Queen Victoria on conversation with Lord Clarendon, May 6, 1866. *Letters of Queen Victoria*, second series I, p. 325).

But Austria did pay too high a price for French neutrality, nevertheless. Article 3, unless its none too precise wording were used as a means of escape, contained the germ of a dangerous power of interference by France. This Austria need not have allowed. The acceptance of a Rhine state, and the promise not to unite all Germany under Austrian control, would undoubtedly have sufficed, with Venetia, to gain Napoleon's neutrality. In Austria's haste, she acted clumsily; but she was not intentionally disloyal to her German brethren. The *Ballplatz* gave no written promise to allow France to annex even one square mile of German territory; if they gave oral promises, as certain Frenchmen claimed later, such promises were calculated to serve the same purpose as Bismarck's repeated insinuations, and could be easily repudiated.²⁶⁴

Austria may also be criticized on fundamental points of diplomatic procedure. She accepted Napoleon's threats without checking up on them to find out whether Bismarck had really offered the Rhine, or whether Napoleon was really in a position to enter a war. Napoleon's own words to Metternich indicated that he had been dissatisfied with Prussia.²⁶⁵ But the *Ballplatz* did not trouble to ask Metternich the question. Austria, in short, delivered herself to the French, lock, stock, and barrel, without keeping an alternative line of retreat, without any bargaining power. When Mensdorff finally threatened to turn to Prussia, it was too feeble and too late.²⁶⁶ Four days earlier, he might have secured better terms. These negotiations are a glaring commentary on the lack of flexibility of Austrian diplomacy, its misinterpretation of realities, its tardiness and dogmatism.

After all, it mattered little that Austria, in June, made a humiliating treaty, which sacrificed Venetia for French neu-

²⁶⁴ Sybel IV, p. 302 and Oncken I, pp. 290-291, rely too heavily on the reminiscences of Baron André, Drouyn's undersecretary, which are not without errors of fact. G. Roloff. *Bismarck* p. 80, takes a more correct view.

²⁶⁵ Metternich to Mensdorff, June 3, tg. No. 94, June 6, No. 30B (Oncken I, pp. 250, 253-254).

²⁶⁶ *Origines* X, p. 115.

trality and German prospects. The real mistake had been made in March, for the sacrifice of Venetia at that time would have spared her the war, ruined Bismarck's policy, and preserved Austria's position in Germany.

With the alliance signed, the Austrians felt conscience-stricken but secure. They now had a powerful argument with which to encourage the German states,²⁶⁷ to dispel their fear that Napoleon and Bismarck had a secret compact against Austria.²⁶⁸ These politicians of the secondary states were still ready to catch at any straw which gave a prospect of peace. Yet inevitably they were drawn into the vortex of armaments.

²⁶⁷ The *Ballplatz* used this argument at once (Blome to Mensdorff, June 11, No. 67A; Mensdorff's circular tg. June 12, to Munich, Dresden, Hanover, Stuttgart, Karlsruhe, Cassel, and Darmstadt).

²⁶⁸ Blome to Mensdorff, letter of May 5; Handel to Mensdorff, May 22, No. 50; Blome to Mensdorff, May 28, No. 57A.

CHAPTER XII

AUSTRIA SUNDERS HER CHAINS

THE FINAL CONTEST FOR ALLIES

MILITARY considerations had occupied Mensdorff's attention in connection with states outside of Germany as well as inside, during the crowded month of May. Troop movements in southern France and in Russia had aroused his suspicions, though they proved of little consequence.¹ He had tried to induce Denmark and Switzerland to mobilize detachments of their troops on the borders of Prussia and Italy.² The Swiss, at least, complied, because they were glad to prevent impulsive Garibaldians from violating their neutrality.³ And Denmark, unable to secure an agreement with Prussia for the return of North Schleswig, remained officially neutral, while sympathizing with Austria.⁴

Meanwhile, Bismarck had pursued his attempts to create an enemy in Austria's rear, in the Danubian principalities, and was preparing to extend his operations throughout the Balkans. Austria's interest in the future Rumania lay with that of Russia and Turkey in preventing the accession of a foreign prince to the vacant throne;⁵ and Mensdorff secretly

¹ Mensdorff to Metternich, May 29, No. 3 *réserve* (Oncken I, p. 237), Mensdorff to Revertera, April 5, No. 5.

² Mensdorff to Frankenstein, May 13; Mensdorff to Mensshengen, May 14, June 19. In February, Mensdorff had expressed the hope that Austria could count on Denmark in a war, and intimated that an arrangement could be made about North Schleswig (Frahm: "Die Bismarcksche Lösung der schleswig-holsteinische Frage," in *Zeitschrift der Gesellschaft für schleswig-holsteinische Geschichte* LIX, 1930, p. 429, quoting Friis *Nordslesvigske Spørgsmaal* I, p. 102).

³ Mensshengen to Mensdorff, June 18, tg.

⁴ Austrian sympathies: Wimpffen to Gablenz, letter of April 8 (HHS, *Nachlass Gablenz*).

⁵ Riker: *The Making of Roumania* pp. 516-517.

encouraged Russia in her opposition.⁶ But he could not openly break with Napoleon, who was checking the Turks and secretly encouraging a foreign prince. Consequently, "Austria was doomed to remain a passive and troubled witness of events she could not prevent."⁷ The suspicion of the *Ballplatz* had gradually become a certainty, that Bismarck and Napoleon both had a hand in the election of Prince Karl of Hohenzollern by the Rumanians on April 15.⁸ Mensdorff tried to get England to join the side of those who wanted the treaties upheld.⁹ Though the Austrians were forewarned before the Prince set out for his adopted country, and though he passed through the length of Austria and under the very shadow of Vienna on a slow Danube steamer, he was not apprehended by the Austrian police, perhaps not even suspected.¹⁰ Mensdorff raged in vain at the impotence of the Paris conference to prevent the flaunting of its resolutions;¹¹ he hoped that Turkey would occupy the principalities, and he threatened independent action if the powers opposed her.¹² But he was too busy with Prussia, Italy, and the German states to carry out his threats. Moreover, his experienced consul in Bukarest, Baron Eder, took a calmer view of the situation: two regiments would suffice to conquer the land, he wrote, and one cannon shot would drive out the new

⁶ Mensdorff to Revertera, March 29.

⁷ Riker p. 517.

⁸ To the Prussians, Mensdorff accused Napoleon; to the French and English, he railed against Bismarck.

⁹ Mensdorff to Apponyi, April 19, No. 1 (Henry: *L'Abdication du Prince Cuza* p. 323).

¹⁰ As both Prussia and France officially denied connection with the candidacy, Austria might have seized the Prince without adverse consequences, and with legal correctness, for travelling under false passports (For his passports, see Stern IX, pp. 225-226).

¹¹ Mensdorff to Metternich, May 25 (Henry p. 391).

¹² Mensdorff to Metternich and Apponyi, May 29 (Henry p. 396). But Mensdorff checked his more zealous envoy, Prokesch, in Constantinople (Schlitter: "Oesterreich-Ungarn und die Anfänge Rumaniens 1856-1871" pp. 114-115, in *Aus der Regierungszeit Kaiser Franz Joseph I.* pp. 105-189. Schlitter's account begins in detail only in June 1866, but is thoroughly documented from that point, with Austrian materials).

ruler.¹³ If truth be told, Prince Karl was too fearful of the threatened Turkish assault to play the villain's role against Austria for which Bismarck had chosen him.¹⁴ Consequently, Franz Joseph, though watchful, did not actually divert any troops to the East from the armies on the Prussian and Italian fronts.¹⁵

He was equally fortunate in the case of his Serbian frontier. Early in 1866, his consul in Belgrade had reported a notable change for the better in the attitude of the leaders and the peasantry toward Austria. The consul gave the credit to Prince Michael, the ruler, who had repeatedly assured him that he wished to initiate closer relations with the monarchy.¹⁶ Mindful of this, in May, on Mensdorff's recommendation, Franz Joseph conferred a high decoration upon Prince Michael.¹⁷ The *Ballplatz* felt that they had a friend also in Prince Nikita of Montenegro, and believed, "in the event of hostilities taking place in the Adriatic, that His Highness might be very useful . . . to promote the interests of Austria. . . ."¹⁸ Bismarck thought differently, and shortly before the war broke out, he began to give official encouragement to a revolutionary enterprise which aimed at "the march of Serbian battalions to Agram and the founding of a South-Slav state."¹⁹

Meanwhile, Mensdorff and his colleagues viewed with satisfaction the decision of Bavaria, Saxony, Würtemberg, Darmstadt, and Nassau to mobilize their forces.²⁰ The reso-

¹³ Eder to Mensdorff, April 15, No. 55 (Henry pp. 307-308).

¹⁴ Wendel: *Bismarck und Serbien im Jahre 1866* p. 45 (from Prussian documents).

¹⁵ Riker p. 558 note 1 (from documents in the *Kriegsarchiv*).

¹⁶ Gödel-Lannoy to Mensdorff, February 26, 1866, cited in Mensdorff's *Vortrag* of May 17.

¹⁷ Mensdorff's *Vortrag* of May 17, approved May 21 by Franz Joseph.

¹⁸ Mensdorff's remark (Bloomfield to Clarendon, May 24, No. 276. F.O. 7 Austria 707).

¹⁹ Wendel p. 53. Wendel's book illuminates the entire *démarche* as far as possible from official and printed sources.

²⁰ Cf. Franz Joseph's letter of May 11 (*Briefe an seine Mutter* p. 355).

lution of these states was strengthened at a conference which met at Bamberg on May 13 and 14, and included Hanover and the Thuringian courts as observers.²¹ Within a week, Baron Dalwigk, speaking for Hesse-Darmstadt, could notify Vienna that "we are completely mobilized and will fulfil our duties to the last moment."²² Less encouraging was the news that the Würtemberg contingents could not be ready before June 25.²³ That the military cooperation of Baden was out of the question, had become clear to the *Ballplatz*. Knowing the difficulties with which Baron Edelsheim had to cope at court, Austria had not embarrassed him by pressure.²⁴ The most that Austria could expect was political cooperation in the Diet,²⁵ and this depended upon the influence which Pfordten and Varnbüler could exercise in Karlsruhe.²⁶ Even Bavaria's scheduled output of 45,000 trained soldiers within three weeks seemed highly exaggerated.²⁷ Nevertheless, it was a heartening fact that five *Mittelstaaten* had crossed the Rubicon.

With this success behind them, the *Ballplatz* pressed on to the solution of the two remaining problems, the coordination of these scattered local forces into a single military machine, and the consolidation of the political front against Prussia, already united in the Diet in April. These problems taxed Austrian diplomacy to the utmost, and in the end they were even less satisfactorily solved than the Vienna statesmen, in their pessimism, had anticipated.

²¹ For the Bamberg conference, see Dalwigk's *Tagebucher* pp. 215-217. Mensdorff secured detailed information from Pfordten and Beust (Blome to Mensdorff, May 17, No. 50A; Werner to Mensdorff, May 17 No. 57A, May 19 No. 58).

²² Dalwigk's letter of May 20 (Vogt p. 96).

²³ Handel to Mensdorff, second letter of May 26.

²⁴ Zulauf to Mensdorff, May 4, No. 30.

²⁵ Zulauf to Mensdorff, May 18, No. 36.

²⁶ Handel to Mensdorff, first letter of May 5; Blome to Mensdorff, May 20, No. 52. They both offered their services.

²⁷ "Reliable" data communicated by Pfordten to Blome (Blome to Mensdorff, April 3, No. 28C *Geheim*).

The coordination of the federal military forces met unexpectedly vigorous opposition. "Each of the Kings wanted to manage his own war-policy; it did not dawn on them that they thereby handed themselves over to the single enemy who was ready to strike."²⁸ The worst offenders were Baden and Bavaria. Franz Joseph had secured the appointment of one of his high officers, Prince Alexander of Hesse, to the command of the eighth federal army corps.²⁹ Baden, though she had made no military contribution herself, objected to this connection with the Austrian army, and forced Varnbüler to request and to secure the Prince's resignation from Habsburg service.³⁰ Austria then tried to exert her influence through the liaison officer, Colonel Schönfeld.³¹ But Pfordten, with shortsighted sectionalism, complained of this Austrian pressure,³² and yet his own attempt to achieve some unity of effort among the *Mittelstaaten* through conferences of officers at Munich, proved of little avail.³³

Still less justifiable was the flat refusal of the Bavarian minister-president to permit military conversations with the Austrians until war had broken out.³⁴ This was due, as we shall see later, to Pfordten's *idée fixe* that Bavaria should continue to mediate and to maintain a non-partisan attitude to the last moment. Pfordten's hesitancy was not lessened by

²⁸ Friedjung I, p. 329.

²⁹ Prince Alexander was Varnbüler's second choice, after one of the princes of Würtemberg (Handel to Mensdorff, letter of April 2).

³⁰ Handel to Mensdorff, letter of May 15; cf. Zulauf to Mensdorff, May 25, No. 39.

³¹ Minutes of the military conference of May 13 (Appendix C); Blome to Mensdorff, letter of May 16. Baden objected again, but made use of her connections to gain military information which she passed on to Berlin (Zulauf to Mensdorff, May 25, No. 39).

³² Blome to Mensdorff, May 20, No. 52; Dalwigk: *Tagebücher* p. 219.

³³ Blome to Mensdorff, May 20, No. 52; Friesen II, p. 151. For the minutes of these conferences, see E. Frauenholz: *Die Heerführung des Feldmarschalls Prinzen Carl von Bayern im Feldzug von 1866* (Munich 1925).

³⁴ Blome to Mensdorff, May 16 tg. Mensdorff had requested, on May 13, that a Bavarian general be sent to Vienna to prepare an Austro-Bavarian military agreement. A second attempt, on May 21, also failed (Blome to Mensdorff, May 22, No. 53B).

the firm conviction of the military leaders that the Austrian army was inferior to the Prussian.³⁵ To the consternation of Austrian and Bavarian officers, the elderly Prince Carl, King Ludwig's uncle, was chosen to head the Bavarian forces (the seventh federal corps).³⁶ The foremost military man, General von der Tann, reluctantly became his chief of staff.³⁷ Still more distracting were the palace influences. While old King Ludwig I bombarded King William in Berlin with anguished appeals to "keep the peace" and to "desist from unrighteous cravings,"³⁸ the young sovereign went into "tantrums" at the thought of hostilities, and caused grave doubts as to his sanity.³⁹ And the public, divided between fear of France and enmity toward Prussia, had no love for Austria.⁴⁰

Exasperated at Pfordten's eternal delaying, Franz Joseph despatched one of his marshals with a personal letter to Prince Carl. He showed the danger of the situation, but promised that he would not take the initiative of an attack against Prussia; and in a second letter, he offered to preserve "and if possible increase" Bavaria's territory, if she would now join Austria.⁴¹ Still Pfordten would not budge. Another urgent telegram from Vienna elicited only the reply that an officer would be sent after the chambers voted credits for the

³⁵ Blome to Mensdorff, April 3, No. 28C *Geheim*; letter of April 7.

³⁶ Blome to Mensdorff, April 3, No. 28C *Geheim*.

³⁷ Hugo von Helvig: *Ludwig Freiherr von der Tann-Rathsamhausen* (Berlin 1882) p. 107. Blome assumed that Tann's hostility to Austria was due to his Protestantism (Blome to Mensdorff, letter of April 7).

³⁸ Letters of May 25 and 30 (HAA).

³⁹ Blome to Mensdorff, letters of June 13 and 14, giving many piquant details.

⁴⁰ For Bavarian public opinion, see the brilliant analysis by K. A. von Müller: *Bayern im Jahre 1866*, pp. 31-61; also Ruider: *Bismarck und die öffentliche Meinung in Bayern 1862-1866*. Cf. Bandmann pp. 106-118.

⁴¹ On this mission of FML Count Huyn, see Friedjung I, pp. 467-468; Stern IX, p. 479; Huyn's reports of May 28 and 29, Prince Carl's letter of May 28, Franz Joseph's letter of June 4. Franz Joseph's first letter is not preserved in HHS, but the fact that it contained the promise not to attack may be deduced from Pfordten's "Antrag" of June 8 (Doeberl: *Bayern und Deutschland im 19ten Jahrhundert* p. 123).

army.⁴² When Tann was finally allowed to negotiate an agreement with Benedek, Pfordten cut the heart out of it by refusing to permit the Bavarian army to leave its home territory to join the main Austrian army in Bohemia.⁴³ Only after Franz Joseph had accepted this amendment, and had promised not to make peace without Bavarian consent did he secure an arrangement at all. By that time the war had been in progress more than a week. There is no clearer case of the disastrous effects of political shortsightedness than this performance of Pfordten's. "The minister had foreseen the war as possible under certain circumstances and rejected neutrality in any case, yet he had preached peace and really delayed the necessary arming for war; the people had desired peace, but preached war and likewise done nothing to prepare seriously for this outcome. Thus minister and people found themselves at last on the brink, yes actually in the midst of a campaign for which hardly the first preparations had been made."⁴⁴

To this confusion of mind and spirit, the clear-headedness of the Saxon leaders presented a notable contrast. The Dresden ministry and the King, it is true, were determined for political reasons to uphold the *Bund*, and to keep from any appearance of a pact with Austria, so dreaded by public opinion.⁴⁵ But they had sent an army officer to Vienna as early as March, to discuss possibilities. At the Bamberg conference, Beust had presented a plan for the union of the Saxon, Bavarian, and Württemberg forces into a considerable federal army in northeast Bavaria, close to the Saxon-Bohem-

⁴² Mensdorff to Blome, June 5 tg.; Blome to Mensdorff, June 5, No. 61.

⁴³ Documents in Doeberl pp. 123-138, supplementing Blome's reports.

⁴⁴ Müller pp. 60-61.

⁴⁵ For an analysis of King Johann's policy at this time, see Johann Georg, Herzog zu Sachsen: "König Johann von Sachsen im Jahre 1866," in *Neues Archiv für sächsische Geschichte und Altertumskunde* LVII, 1926, pp. 295-328; Helmut Klocke: "Die sächsische Politik und der norddeutsche Bund," *Ibid.*, LVIII, 1926, pp. 97-163; O. A. Hecker: "König Johann von Sachsen und die deutsche Einheitsbewegung," in *Deutsche Rundschau* CLI, 1912, pp. 257-275 (of less importance).

ian border.⁴⁶ This plan had been spoiled by Pfordten, who wished to keep his forces separate.⁴⁷ As a result, King Johann looked with favor upon the alternative idea of a junction with the Austrian army in Bohemia, warmly advocated by Crown Prince Albert.⁴⁸ This idea was the core of an agreement, purely oral, now effected between the Crown Prince, who commanded one Saxon army-corps, and the head of the forces in Bohemia, Baron Ringelsheim, who had gone incognito to Dresden for the purpose.⁴⁹ Beust had already demanded and secured from Franz Joseph a categorical declaration "that in case of a Prussian invasion, Austrian troops, on Saxony's request, will enter at once, and that Austria will consider a Prussian inroad into Saxony as a breach of the federal pact, and therefore as *casus belli*."⁵⁰ Details of the cooperation were arranged during a second mission of Baron Ringelsheim in early June.⁵¹

If Mensdorff's greatest difficulties in building a fighting coalition of the German states against Prussia were, as in Bavaria, certain individuals, in other states he had to combat a vigorous Prussian diplomatic offensive. A struggle of this latter sort occurred in Hanover and Hesse-Cassel. Mensdorff's first concern with these north Germans was to secure the unimpeded retreat of Gablenz' forces from Holstein to Bavaria and the war theater in Bohemia. His second purpose

⁴⁶ For the military plans and negotiations of Saxony, see especially Schubert: *Lebenserinnerungen* pp. 470-474; Friesen II, pp. 150-151; Lettow-Vorbeck II, pp. 64-66; Hassel. *Albert von Sachsen* II, p. 220 ff.

⁴⁷ Schubert p. 471; Friesen II, p. 151.

⁴⁸ King Johann to Grand Duke Friedrich of Baden, letter of May 17 (Oncken: *Friedrich von Baden* I, p. 507).

⁴⁹ Crown Prince Albert to Benedek, May 20 (Friedjung II, p. 598); Schubert pp. 472-473. For Ringelsheim's mission to Dresden: Mensdorff to Werner, May 2 tg, May 8 tg, Werner to Mensdorff, May 3 tg. No. 2, May 7 tg., May 8 tg. and despatch No. 54. These Austrian documents disprove Schubert's assertion that Beust had not been included in the military conversations.

⁵⁰ Werner to Mensdorff, May 7 tg.; Mensdorff to Werner, May 8 tg. Friedjung was ignorant of this promise to Saxony when he criticized Vienna for trying to spur Benedek to march northward in early June (I, p. 333).

⁵¹ Schubert p. 474. Beust's remarks on this mission, in his memoirs (I, pp. 428-429) are vague and confused.

was to induce them to mobilize and fight, so as to detain as large a part of Prussia's army as possible. Knowing Hanover's antipathy to the Prince of Augustenburg, Mensdorff waited until May before pressing King George to cooperate with Austria and the secondary states in support of the federal ideal in Germany.⁵² The Prussian reform proposals had so angered the blind monarch that he assured Mensdorff of his vote against them in the Diet. "In war also, you will find me true to the Confederation, . . . they can depend upon that in Vienna," said the King, as he paid Count Ingelheim the compliment of wearing the Austrian uniform.⁵³

In reporting these words to Vienna, the envoy makes the first mention of a proposal which has hitherto been accepted as originating in the *Ballplatz*, the idea of linking the Austrian forces in the Duchies with the Hanoverian army at the outbreak of war, and placing Gablenz in command of the tenth army corps thus formed. Seemingly it was the King of Hanover who suggested the plan.⁵⁴ Count Ingelheim submitted it at once to Mensdorff and to Gablenz.⁵⁵ The latter found it "*ganz vortreflich*" and of much political significance, especially if the federal contingent from Holstein were recruited and joined to it.⁵⁶

The *Ballplatz* meditated. A fortnight later, when Mensdorff's disarmament proposal had collapsed, and the time had come to gather all possible forces around the good cause, they

⁵² Mensdorff to Gablenz, letter of March 13, 1866; Mensdorff to Ingelheim, March 16, April 28.

⁵³ Ingelheim to Mensdorff, April 17, No. 19 *chiffre*.

⁵⁴ Ingelheim to Mensdorff, April 17, No. 19 *chiffre*. Ingelheim does not state definitely whether he himself, or the King, or anyone else was the author. But he implies strongly that George took the initiative. And he states that no one else but the war minister and the King's adjutant, Kohlrausch, a devoted partisan of Austria, knew of it. Hanoverian authorship is definitely affirmed by Gablenz in a memorandum dated at Kiel, May 15, 1866 (HHS), and by his attaché, Major C. Junck, in a little-known anonymous article: "Holstein unter der oesterreichischen Statthalterschaft," in *Deutsche Vierteljahrschrift* CXIX, 1867, p. 235.

⁵⁵ Ingelheim to Gablenz, April 17, tg.

⁵⁶ Gablenz to Ingelheim, April 17, tg. (HHS, *Nachlass Gablenz*).

sent Prince Solms, half-brother of the King, with a letter from Franz Joseph to George V. The prince was the bearer also of an Austrian offer to guarantee the integrity of Hanover if attacked, and the request that the King entrust the forces of the tenth army corps to Gablenz.⁵⁷ The King accepted the offer, and instantaneously granted the request. But the game was not so easily won, for Bismarck's turn had now come.

The further negotiations between Hanover and the two German rivals are well known.⁵⁸ Hassell, the historian of Hanover, and that confidant of the King, Oskar Meding, have enlightened us upon the intimate details of the battle between the blind monarch and his counsellors, when Bismarck's armaments and threats in mid-May turned the tide at court in favor of a neutrality treaty with Prussia, only to give way before another Austrian diplomatic offensive in the hands again of Prince Solms and Count Ingelheim.⁵⁹

To this account, the Austrian documents add many interesting details. On May 12, Ingelheim first signalized the unfavorable change toward neutrality. Mensdorff at once began to weigh various counter-moves. He thought of calling on the Diet to intervene;⁶⁰ he tried to secure the aid already promised by the Duke of Brunswick, but the Duke was absent in Silesia.⁶¹ He put hopeful words in Ingelheim's mouth: the first Prussian shot would bring "all Europe" to Hanover's side.⁶² And when Platen, the prime minister, had the temerity to ask the envoy's approval for a neutrality-treaty, Ingelheim answered with a strong "no."⁶³ Moreover, the South

⁵⁷ Ingelheim to Mensdorff, May 3, tg.

⁵⁸ See especially Sybel IV, pp. 263-264, 284-286; Stern IX, pp. 467-468; Hassell. *Geschichte des Königreichs Hannover* II, Heft 2; G. W. V, pp. 489 f., 496 ff., 503 ff.; Lettow-Vorbeck: *Geschichte des Krieges von 1866* I, pp. 117-135.

⁵⁹ Oskar Meding: *Memoiren zur Zeitgeschichte* (3 vols., Leipzig 1881-1884) II, p. 68 ff. is inaccurate in details, and is criticised by Hassell, who asserts that Meding was in Bismarck's pay. Cf. G. W. V, p. 497.

⁶⁰ Mensdorff to Ingelheim, tgs. of May 12 and 15.

⁶¹ Mensdorff to Ingelheim, May 16 tg.; Ingelheim to Mensdorff, May 17 tg.

⁶² Mensdorff to Ingelheim, May 16 tg.

⁶³ Ingelheim to Mensdorff, May 17, tg. 6:45 p. m.

German states in convention at Bamberg at that moment, bombarded Hanover with messages in the same tenor.⁶⁴ Finally, Mensdorff empowered Baron Kübeck to arouse the Diet against Prussia's "machinations,"⁶⁵ while Solms set out again to Hanover with a kit-full of the *Ballplatz'* sharpest diplomatic tools. A second letter from the Kaiser appealed to the King not to do anything which would hinder him from carrying out the decrees of the *Bund*.⁶⁶ In private conversations Prince Solms doubtless went much farther, and accused Prussia of promising the Rhine to Napoleon, etc.⁶⁷ A well-conceived note to Ingelheim argued eloquently for Hanover's joining the federal cohorts, to isolate Prussia and thus force her to seek peace.

If it should come to war, wrote Mensdorff, Austria might not be able immediately to protect Hanover, but her future would be assured. If Austria should *win* the war, "many a combination would be at hand in North Germany, through which Hanover might be rounded out and come out of the war with a very important increase of power."⁶⁸ On Prussia's side, she would have only the alternative of being annexed or mediatised.

Biegeleben's concluding words were calculated well to demolish the Prussian tendencies: "Least of all should a state like Hanover give the first signal for a desertion from the German *Bund*."⁶⁹

The King's view triumphed over that of the majority of his

⁶⁴ Bloomfield to Clarendon, May 17, No. 265 Confidential (F. O. 7 Austria 707).

⁶⁵ Mensdorff to Kübeck, May 19, tg. 7:45 a. m. See declaration in *Staatsarchiv* XI, pp. 30-31.

⁶⁶ Draft letter, Franz Joseph to George V (HHS).

⁶⁷ Sybel IV, p. 285 "on good authority."

⁶⁸ Possibly Solms offered "parts of Holstein" (Meding II, p. 94). More probably he spoke of Prussian territory (cf. Sybel IV, p. 285; Cramm-Burgdorf: "Der Winter 1865/1866 in Hannover," in *Preussische Jahrbücher* CXI, 1903, pp. 59-60). Prince Ysenburg reported to Bismarck that Austria offered Oldenburg, Lippe, Waldeck, and parts of Prussia (Lettow-Vorbeck I, p. 127), and it was Bismarck's opinion that King George wanted to reerect the empire of Henry the Lion (Kohl: *Die politischen Reden Bismarcks* IV, p. 138).

⁶⁹ Mensdorff to Ingelheim, May 18, 1866.

ministers. Count Platen and the minister of war, Brandis, contributed to the Austrian victory.⁷⁰ At the last minute, Pfordten added his word against neutrality.⁷¹ Moreover, the Duke of Brunswick turned up, and assured Austria that if King George weakened again, he (the Duke) would work upon him with all his influence for the cause.⁷² The move was not necessary. George was even willing to speak a good word in Cassel, where Austria was trying similar tactics on the Elector to the same end.⁷³ He kept his word to Gablenz, and promised free passage and protection to the Kalik brigade. But he now insisted that its union with the Hanoverian army should not be carried out except at his own pleasure,⁷⁴ — which meant the abandonment of the scheme. As the King, however, had been won over against the opinion of his subjects and the majority of his ministers, and as Bismarck (if we may believe Manteuffel) had been "sure of Hanover,"⁷⁵ Mensdorff could plume himself on one diplomatic victory over the *Wilhelmstrasse* to lighten the score. Though Count Wimpffen did not succeed in persuading the Elector of Hesse to concentrate his troops near Hanau, yet that ruler promised free passage to the Kalik brigade and a steadfast adherence to the federal pact.⁷⁶

⁷⁰ Meding confuses the two missions of Prince Solms, and minimizes their results (II, p. 96).

⁷¹ Ingelheim to Mensdorff, May 25, No. 28B. Pfordten's *démarche* on May 24.

⁷² Ingelheim to Mensdorff, May 26, No. 28 *chiffré*.

⁷³ Ingelheim to Mensdorff, May 24, tg. 2:05 p. m. On May 18, Count Felix Wimpffen was sent to Cassel to secure an agreement for immediate military cooperation. Mensdorff promised to "keep the Hessian dynasty in its established position . . . and according to circumstances to better it." (Mensdorff to Wimpffen, May 18). The Count bore a friendly letter from Franz Joseph to the Elector. On Wimpffen's suggestion, Mensdorff also freed the Elector from the fear that he personally might be forced to abdicate (Mensdorff to Wimpffen, May 24).

⁷⁴ Memorandum in Platen's hand (HHS); Ingelheim to Mensdorff, May 30 tg. The change accepted by Mensdorff by tg. May 28.

⁷⁵ Manteuffel to Bismarck, April 8, No. 9 (HAA), recalling Bismarck's own words.

⁷⁶ Felix Wimpffen to Mensdorff, May 24. For a comparison of the mailed fist diplomacy of the Prussian envoy, General Roeder, with the silk glove

The smaller German states did not tempt Mensdorff to expend much effort in trying to win their support.⁷⁷ He bestowed a few courtesies upon the rulers of Weimar and Meiningen.⁷⁸ But his attempt through Count Wimpffen to draw military support from the well-known sympathies of Duke Bernhard failed utterly.⁷⁹ When Mensdorff's cousin of Coburg turned to Prussia on well-calculated political grounds,⁸⁰ the foreign minister tried to draw him back by arguing, against his own inmost conviction, that "this time it is going to go badly with Prussia."⁸¹ Probably the *Ballplatz* considered these states too small and too close to Prussia to worry about. But the fact remains that in nearly all of them, public opinion cursed the Bismarck government, and resisted Prussian hegemony.⁸² Rare was the state where neither the ruler, as in Rudolstadt, nor his wife, as in Waldeck, nor his chief minister, as in Mecklenburg, nor the senate, as in Hamburg, was not an adherent of the power which presided over the Diet.⁸³ Almost unanimously, these petty rulers clung to the federal pact.⁸⁴

manner of the Austrian envoy, Count Paar, see Losch: *Geschichte des Kurfürstentums Hessen, 1803-1866* pp. 381-383, and Kuehn: *Das Ende einer Dynastie* pp. 259-260.

⁷⁷ Lange: *Bismarck und die norddeutschen Kleinstaaten im Jahre 1866* p. 71, is "astonished" at Austrian inactivity; he found very few traces of Austrian diplomacy in the archives of these states.

⁷⁸ For Weimar: Mensdorff to Werner, April 5; Franz Joseph to Karl Alexander, letter of May 29. A study of Weimar's policy is needed, to supplement the brief sections in Lange. For Meiningen: Uttenhoven to Mensdorff, letter of March 10; Mensdorff to Uttenhoven, letter of March 22; Erich Schmidt: *Das Verhältniss Sachsen-Meiningen's zur Reichsgründung* p. 52 (an admirable study of Meiningen's policy); Lange p. 15.

⁷⁹ Lange p. 41, from a source probably not entirely trustworthy.

⁸⁰ Ernst II to Mensdorff, letter of May 10 (Mager: *Herzog Ernst II. und die schleswig-holsteinische Frage 1863-1866* pp. 49-50). Mager justly criticizes (pp. 43-53) the accounts in Ernst's *Denkwürdigkeiten* III, pp. 498-510, and in Tempelty pp. 40-41.

⁸¹ Excerpts from Mensdorff's letter of May 19 (Lorenz: *Kaiser Wilhelm und die Begründung des deutschen Reiches* p. 62, with unjustified conclusions as to Mensdorff's supposed desire for war. Also p. 566). There is no trace of Mensdorff's private correspondence with Ernst in HHS.

⁸² Lange chapter i, and extensive literature cited in bibliography.

⁸³ Lange, book 2, *passim*.

⁸⁴ Lange, chapter i.

In Württemberg, where monarch and minister had been among the first to assure Austria of their support, there had come a change. The French envoy cooled the ardor of many.⁸⁵ And the religious issue turned the Protestants from Catholic Austria.⁸⁶ King Karl now told all who would hear, that there would be no war; and the majority of his subjects favored neutrality.⁸⁷ Queen Olga, who had helped to win her father, the Tsar, for the federal cause, was being winned and dined in the Hofburg as a reward for past services and a prepayment for the future. Baron Varnbüler was ready to devote all his energy to fighting for the "*Bundesrecht*," with two reservations: if peace were impossible to preserve, and if France did not join Prussia.⁸⁸ To sound French plans, he sent Julius Fröbel to Paris, and secured Napoleon's blessing for a union of the South German states with a common parliament.⁸⁹ Not long afterward, he was initiated into some of the mysteries of the *idées napoléoniennes* by Baron Geiger from Paris,⁹⁰ as a result of which occult revelations, he hardly knew whether to be flattered or frightened.⁹¹ To do his bit for peace, he dusted off his mediation project of May 1865, gave it a few new

⁸⁵ Handel to Mensdorff, letter of May 10.

⁸⁶ Handel to Mensdorff, May 2 No. 39A, letter of May 15.

⁸⁷ Handel to Mensdorff, May 2 No. 39A, May 22 No. 50. For an analysis of the currents of opinion in Württemberg, see Rapp: *Die Württemberger und die nationale Frage 1863-1871* pp. 125-160; for the King's attitude, see Mack: *König Karl I. von Württemberg und die deutsche Frage* pp. 12-13.

⁸⁸ Handel to Mensdorff, May 22, No. 50.

⁸⁹ For Fröbel's mission in late April, see his own account in *Ein Lebenslauf* II, pp. 419-424, which checks with Earl Cowley's report, except in details (Cowley to Clarendon, April 20, No. 505 Confidential. F. O. 27 France 1615). Cf. Wächter to Varnbüler, April 15 (Oncken I, pp. 136-137). Varnbüler did not tell the whole story to the Austrians (Handel to Mensdorff, letter of April 20), but they got it from Pfordten (Blome to Mensdorff, letter of May 1).

⁹⁰ For Geiger's mission to Munich and Stuttgart, with a plan to enlarge Bavaria and Württemberg at the expense of Baden, Prussia at the expense of Hanover, Saxony at the cost of Thuringia, and to place the Grand Duke of Hesse on the throne of a new Rhineland kingdom of Burgundy, see Fröbel II, pp. 421-422, 426-431. Cf. Oncken I, pp. 178-179 and note 1. (Oncken's doubts would have been dispersed by a glance at Fröbel's account).

⁹¹ Cf. Handel to Mensdorff, letter of May 24, despatch of June 2, No. 59A.

twists, and sent it by Fröbel to Mensdorff, after he had elicited a non-committal word from Bismarck upon it.⁹² Finally, on the 9th of June, Varnbüler's son-in-law turned up at the *Ballplatz* to promote the plan; but by that late date, Manteuffel's advance was driving Gablenz from Holstein, and Mensdorff therefore closed the incident with a cordial personal letter to the resourceful Württemberg premier.⁹³ By humoring Varnbüler's fancies, Mensdorff had presumably saved Franz Joseph from the necessity of making promises of territory.⁹⁴

AUSTRIA TURNS TO THE DIET

Meanwhile, during May, the chief preoccupation of the Austrian statesmen had been the question of diplomatic preparation for the *casus belli*. Once Austria had mobilized, no matter how much she desired peace, she had to face the immediate prospect of war and plan for it. This was all the more urgent when Prussia mobilized in reply, since certain Prussian circles were known to favor a surprise attack. And Bismarck was thought to prefer an early attack in order to save too heavy a drain on the treasury.⁹⁵ From the first week in May, the *Ballplatz* therefore expected the Prussian invasion

⁹² For the original project, see chapter vi above. The new project took on various forms: cf. Fröbel pp. 424-425; Count Blome-Salzau to Bismarck, letter of April 6 (HAA); Reuss to Bismarck, June 4, No. 141 *Vertraulich* (HAA); Handel to Mensdorff, letter of May 6 (HHS, *Nachlass Rechberg*). Bismarck cleverly suggested that it be submitted in written form to King William, but Varnbüler shied at this (Bismarck to Canitz, April 23, No. 48 *ganz vertraulich*; Canitz to Bismarck, May 2, No. 30 *ganz vertraulich*. HAA). Fröbel did not present the scheme seriously to Mensdorff (Fröbel II, p. 422).

⁹³ Mensdorff to Varnbüler, letter of June 13 (draft, HHS); Handel to Mensdorff, letter of June 2. Varnbüler asked Pfordten to sponsor the project officially but the latter refused (Reuss to Bismarck, June 4, No. 141 *Vertraulich*, HAA; Zwierzina to Mensdorff, June 9, No. 65).

⁹⁴ Varnbüler clung to the idea of annexing Hohenzollern, and after war had broken out he seized the principalities, with the backing of the rump Diet (cf. Handel to Mensdorff, June 22, No. 73).

⁹⁵ The belief: Blome to Mensdorff, letter of May 29. The fact: Bismarck to Manteuffel, letter of June 9 (*Historische Zeitschrift* CXVIII, 1917, p. 251). Cf. Friedjung I, p. 303.

either of Silesia or of Saxony-Bohemia. Besides attempting to forge a military coalition, appropriate action in the Diet had to be planned and prepared. The long-foreseen and twice-announced *démarche* of placing the Duchies question before this assembly might well be branded as a formal breach of the Prussian alliance. The Vienna statesmen therefore preferred to defer this move until after Bismarck himself had committed some overt act of violence, which would enable them to call upon the Diet to mobilize its forces in self-protection.⁹⁶ They contemplated several ways of stimulating Bismarck to take action. The best instrument for the purpose would have been an order to Gablenz to call the Estates of Holstein to express their preference as to their future status.⁹⁷ Such an act Bismarck could not permit. Yet Austria's legal case would be plausible, and her moral case excellent. The move would have been welcomed throughout Germany as a defense of the rights of Augustenburg and the interest of the *Bund*, in the face of naked Prussian force. The breach of treaty would have come from Bismarck, and Austria would be free to bring the Duchies question to the Diet, and demand the mobilization of the federal forces with every prospect of support.

But the *Ballplatz* was divided on the proper time to act. Biegeleben, supported by Blome's fervid counsels, and by Meysenbug, stood for immediate action; Mensdorff, Esterhazy, and Franz Joseph favored delay. The eager ones argued that the diplomatic situation was excellent, and that every moment's delay gave Bismarck opportunity to cool the enthusiasm of many waverers.⁹⁸ Austria could not stand silent while Prussia flaunted the federal pact in word and

⁹⁶ Mensdorff to Metternich and Apponyi, March 1, No. 1; implied in Mensdorff to Blome, May 12; Blome to Mensdorff, letter of May 20 (Appendix A, No. 19).

⁹⁷ Held in reserve in the *Ballplatz* since the Gastein convention was signed; suggested anew by Blome in letter of May 20 (Appendix A, No. 19).

⁹⁸ Blome to Mensdorff, letters of May 8 and 16; Mensdorff to Blome, May 19 *reservirt*.

deed.⁹⁹ Action now would nip the budding congress. From the diplomatic point of view, the advice of Blome and Biegeleben was correct.

But the others had an equally powerful argument. Austria's army was not ready. In early May, it was not one-third ready. The earliest date for the completion of mobilization, if all went well, would be June 10.¹⁰⁰ As May wore on, this date was moved farther and farther along.¹⁰¹ The military men unanimously warned against a premature rupture and Franz Joseph was in agreement with their view.¹⁰² Moreover, Mensdorff, Esterhazy, and the Kaiser, because of their knowledge of the secret Gablenz negotiations, to which Blome and the *Hofräte* were not admitted, felt relieved from the fear of a Prussian attack so long as Gablenz was on the wing. This strengthened their pressure against the Biegeleben group.

Such divided counsels alone were sufficient to produce an uncertain policy toward the Diet during May. This wavering was aggravated by the attitude of Pfordten, which alternated between courage and fear, forward action and retreat, loyalty to the "good cause" and coquetry with Prussia, military ardor and mediation. With full consciousness of the influence which Pfordten wielded, for good or evil, over the South German states, the *Ballplatz* correctly determined to regulate its diplomatic campaign in close cooperation with Bavaria.¹⁰³ The Saxon interpellation in the Diet, an incident which Biegeleben had hoped, and Mensdorff had feared, might goad Bismarck to disruptive action, spurred him only to a verbal defiance of the Diet.¹⁰⁴ The following week, Biegeleben tried

⁹⁹ Mensdorff to Blome, May 19 *reservirt*.

¹⁰⁰ Friedjung I, p. 478.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.* I, p. 479.

¹⁰² See the Emperor's remarks in military conference of May 17 (Appendix C).

¹⁰³ This was, of course, true from the beginning (cf. Mensdorff to Blome, February 28, 1866).

¹⁰⁴ Prussia threatened, under certain circumstances, "to consider her own security and the preservation of her European position in the first line." (*Staatsarchiv* XI, p. 21).

again. He sought Pfordten's support for a motion to ask Prussia to state whether she would protect federal territory against an Italian attack. This would force Prussia to show her hand on Italy, wrote Mensdorff to Blome. If Bismarck's reply was unsatisfactory, the Diet should vote to mobilize for its own protection. He closed with the hint that Pfordten was probably ready to have Austria carry out her intention as to the Duchies.¹⁰⁵ Fortunately or unfortunately, this somewhat incendiary note could not be delivered to the Bavarian minister until he returned from the Bamberg conference. He returned on May 16 more pacific than ever.¹⁰⁶ Quite naturally, he wanted to gain time to complete his armaments.¹⁰⁷ He refused to have anything to do with the Austrian suggestion. In fact, he began another attempt at mediation on the basis of linking federal reform and the Duchies questions.¹⁰⁸ He was gracious enough, however, to give Austria a full account of the recent conference, for which he received Mensdorff's warm thanks.¹⁰⁹ Mensdorff even admitted that he agreed with Pfordten's desire to temporize.¹¹⁰ He let Pfordten into the secret of his plans to foil Prussian diplomacy in Hanover and Cassel, and secured the minister's promise of aid in the Diet.¹¹¹ "Bavaria's point of view," Pfordten declared, "is not neutrality, but non-partisanship, . . . the non-partisan must take up arms against that party which breaks the peace."¹¹²

But Austria could not rest with this. Prussian troop move-

¹⁰⁵ Mensdorff to Blome, May 12.

¹⁰⁶ Blome to Mensdorff, May 16 tg.

¹⁰⁷ Blome to Mensdorff, letter of May 17.

¹⁰⁸ Blome to Mensdorff, May 17, No. 50B

¹⁰⁹ Blome to Mensdorff, May 17, No. 50A; Mensdorff to Blome, May 19 *reservirt*.

¹¹⁰ Mensdorff to Blome, May 19 *reservirt*. Mensdorff "seemed to think that war has not commenced simply because neither of the Principals is yet prepared . . . he looks upon the rupture as inevitable, but he believes weeks may yet elapse before the first blow is struck." (Bloomfield to Clarendon, May 17, No. 265 Confidential F. O. 7 Austria 707).

¹¹¹ Blome to Mensdorff, May 20, No. 52.

¹¹² *Ibid*.

ments soon forced her to press Bavaria for closer cooperation. In a note of May 21, Mensdorff took up Pfordten's mediation plan and cleverly turned it to his own uses.

He agreed to join the questions of reform and the Duchies,—*in the Frankfurt Diet*. He feared that Prussia wanted to extend the February demands to all of North Germany. But since Prussia had brought the reform problem to the Diet, and wished to couple the two questions, Austria would bring the Schleswig-Holstein question before the same forum.¹¹³

Pfordten's reception of this suggestion shows how topsy-turvy his diplomacy had become in three months. When one recalls how he had berated Austria after Gastein for coming to an agreement with Prussia on the Duchies, and how he had fumed in March at Austria's reluctance to bring the Duchies question to Frankfurt, one may well be astonished at the ex-law-professor's present response. He urged Austria to negotiate directly with Prussia, instead of bringing the Duchies into the Diet!¹¹⁴ If Mensdorff had really desired to accept the Gablenz treaty, Pfordten had unwittingly given him an excuse.

But in three days the mood had passed. It is not worth while to seek the causes of each of Pfordten's tergiversations. A word from France was sufficient to raise or lower the barometer of his temperament by several points. The ridiculous incapacity, whims, and humors of Ludwig II, were enough to try stouter nerves than those of the Freiherr's. Pressed by Austria toward a war in which he correctly foresaw nothing but failure for his state and policy, he was loath to break away from the enchantment of Bismarck's strong personality and national aims. "He had indeed overcome his earlier mistrust of Austria and not let himself be lured by Bismarck's 'mirage of a South German hegemony.' In point of fact, the anti-Prussian currents in the highest circles as well as among the masses made it daily more difficult for him to carry on a policy, of whose two-faced character he was perhaps uncon-

¹¹³ Mensdorff to Blome, May 21 (briefly summarized in Sybel IV, p. 286).

¹¹⁴ Blome to Mensdorff, May 22, No. 53A. He feared that Austria's action would be a provocation to Prussia.

scious. Without wishing it, he was driven from his non-partisan stand to the side of Austria."¹¹⁵

On May 25, Blome reported to Vienna that Pfordten considered his mediation ended.¹¹⁶ The envoy again pleaded urgently for the long-postponed diplomatic action.¹¹⁷ The Diet had just unanimously approved a motion for general disarmament.¹¹⁸ The Austrian and Prussian representatives had promised to declare in the next meeting, the conditions under which they would be willing to reduce their armaments. The session was set for June 1. Napoleon's congress also loomed in the foreground. German questions were to be discussed in Paris, and the Confederation was invited to send a representative. These events forced Austria's hand, and well-laid plans were thrown to the winds. The *Ballplatz* now felt that it had to release all its lightning at once, even though it gave Prussia the cry of "treaty-breaker." If the Diet were now charged with the settlement of the Schleswig-Holstein question, then its representative could act in harmony with Austria's at Paris, and the Holstein Estates could make their voice heard on the Seine in behalf of Augustenburg. Bismarck would hardly dare to begin the conflagration in Germany while the congress was in session.¹¹⁹ The disarmament demand of the Diet offered a spectacular opportunity to play the trump card with *éclat*. Yet it was still too early from a military point of view. In this situation, the argument of the generals for delay gave way before the argument of the diplomats for action. At the last minute, Pfordten gave his approval.¹²⁰ On whom the responsibility for the final initiative rests it is impossible to say. Surely Biegeleben backed up Blome's demand for haste,

¹¹⁵ Stern IX, p. 466.

¹¹⁶ Blome to Mensdorff, May 25, No. 55A.

¹¹⁷ Blome to Mensdorff, May 26 tg.

¹¹⁸ Session of May 24 (*Staatsarchiv* XI, pp. 42-45).

¹¹⁹ Mensdorff to Gablenz, May 29.

¹²⁰ Blome to Mensdorff, May 28, No. 57C. Probably the despatches had all been written, and the *démarche* decided without regard to Pfordten's formal approval.

and Mensdorff and the Emperor gave their necessary consent. More cannot yet be determined.

On May 29, the epoch-making instructions were sent to Baron Kübeck,¹²¹ and the transference of the Schleswig-Holstein affair to the august assembly in Frankfurt was announced in a circular to the principal German courts, omitting Hanover out of regard for the scruples of the King.¹²² Austria's position in the Duchies question, it said, was complicated by the treaties of Vienna and Gastein, but the Emperor could no longer be bound by agreements which Prussia had already broken in every way. At the same time, full instructions went out to Gablenz to call the Estates of Holstein at once, to give their opinion on the needs and desires of the land. "We shall await with the liveliest interest," Mensdorff concluded, "your reports on the crisis whose climax we are about to witness."¹²³

The session of June 1 arrived. The presiding envoy arose and declared in Biegeleben's resounding and majestic phrases, that Austria could only disarm when freed from the fear of an attack on her own soil, or in Holstein, or on the territory of her confederates.¹²⁴ Prussia had handled the question of the Duchies purely as a question of force, and had not hesitated before the deplorable decision of seeking support from foreign enemies of the empire. Baron Kübeck then solemnly placed their fate in the hands of the Diet, and announced that the Statthalter had been ordered to call the Estates. Though the affair of the Duchies had sunk into significance before the

¹²¹ In sending the declaration for Kübeck to make in the Diet, Mensdorff informed him that Prussia's declaration would be awaited before a decision would be made whether to move the mobilization of the federal forces; Mensdorff thought Prussia would lower her tone in order to avert such a motion; the Paris congress would not prevent mobilization, because the *Bund* is invited; Kübeck was instructed to vote for Pfordten as envoy from the Diet, or for Beust as second choice (Mensdorff to Kübeck, May 29).

¹²² Austrian circular, May 29, to Munich, Dresden, Stuttgart, Karlsruhe, Cassel, and Darmstadt.

¹²³ Mensdorff to Gablenz, May 29 (drafted, of course, by Biegeleben).

¹²⁴ *Staatsarchiv* XI, pp. 66-67.

greater issues in the air, yet this act of Kübeck's was appreciated by all as the opening salvo of the contest for the settlement of those issues. Austria had cut the Gordian knot of the January protocol of 1864, and regained her pristine freedom once more.

BISMARCK TRIUMPHANT: THE WAR COMES

How Bismarck quickly accepted the gauge of battle, how he strove to lash Austria into firing the first shot, and how the Danube monarchy whipped up its allies to vote the Execution against the recalcitrant rival are oft-told tales. To the last, Bismarck expected that Austria's fire-eaters, and her financial difficulties, would lead her to "add another idiotic act to those she had already committed."¹²⁵ He hoped that, by a swift advance into Holstein, Manteuffel would force Austria "to open the war, unless she was willing to accept a . . . humiliation which would betray weakness and fear rather than a love of peace."¹²⁶ The harassed minister-president forgot that only a week before, while the congress still impended, he had wired instructions to the governor of Schleswig *not* to take any measures which would provoke hostilities before the 14th or 15th.¹²⁷ As it was, Gablenz escaped with his troops across the Elbe into Hanover without a scratch, and Bismarck had to look elsewhere for his *casus belli*.¹²⁸

In evacuating the Duchies without a shot, Gablenz too had spoiled the plans of his superiors in Vienna, and laid himself

¹²⁵ Bismarck to Usedom, April 30, tg. No. 96 (PGS: unpublished).

¹²⁶ Bismarck to Manteuffel, June 9 (*G. W. V.*, p. 532); cf. letter of June 9, published, with comment, by Richard Sternfeld, in *Historische Zeitschrift* CXVIII, 1917, pp. 250-262. Sternfeld's criticisms of Lettow-Vorbeck and Friedjung are justified, but his lack of acquaintance with the unpublished documents impairs his reconstruction of the incident.

¹²⁷ Bismarck to Manteuffel, June 3, tg. No. 141 *geheim, für Ew persönlich* (HAA; omitted from *G. W. V.*). Cf. Manteuffel to Bismarck, letter of June 10 (*Bismarck-Jahrbuch* IV, p. 106), a key-document by overlooking which, Sternfeld misjudged Manteuffel's motives (*Historische Zeitschrift*, *loc. cit.* pp. 256, 260).

¹²⁸ *G. W. V.*, p. 534.

open to the charge of actual disobedience.¹²⁹ During the war-scare of the previous March, when he had concerted plans with Mensdorff for the retreat, it had been the supposition of both men and of the war office that the Kalik brigade might have to sustain a small affray with the Prussians before withdrawing.¹³⁰ In May, however, Gablenz' ideas seem to have undergone a change. He saw the danger of being bottled up by the Prussians in front and rear, and forced to surrender, unless he retreated rapidly. He therefore decided to leave no time for the slightest military skirmish,¹³¹ and this decision was in accord with Franz Joseph's wishes.¹³²

This change however upset the plans of the *Ballplatz*. There the idea prevailed that, since the Prussians would begin the attack in Holstein, the guilt could be cast upon them in the eyes of Germany if Gablenz would make a nominal stand on behalf of federal rights in Holstein. From this starting point, the diplomats could derive their legal grounds, first, for a motion in the Diet to mobilize the federal forces against the aggressor, and secondly, for a move by Benedek to protect the Saxon army, if necessary by an advance into Saxony itself.¹³³ The mere breach of the Gastein convention left the *Mittelstaaten* cold; they demanded more evident grounds against Prussia before they voted for federal mobilization.¹³⁴ Some were only too glad to point to Gablenz's retreat to Altona as evidence of Austrian connivance with Prussia. Mensdorff

¹²⁹ The following incident, widely known in Vienna at the time, has seemingly escaped the notice of historians, except for a hint in Friedjung I, p. 332, and a brief notice in Reinhold Lorenz, *loc. cit.* p. 201.

¹³⁰ Gablenz to Mensdorff, March 4, No. 31 *Geheim*; Gablenz to Franck, March 4, No. 352/II *res.*; orders from war department March 12; Mensdorff to Gablenz, letter of March 13. On March 17 and 21, Gablenz submitted a detailed plan for evacuation. Mensdorff approved it, but reserved the right to change it later if necessary (Mensdorff to Gablenz, April 12).

¹³¹ Gablenz to Mensdorff, May 14, No. 63A.

¹³² See the discussion of the evacuation of Holstein, in the military conference of May 17 (Appendix C).

¹³³ Friedjung I, p. 332. Cf. *Allgemeine Zeitung*, No. 159, Wien June 7, 1866 (inspired article).

¹³⁴ Cf. Werner to Mensdorff, June 8 *tg.*

therefore adjured the *Statthalter* to make a stand in Altona, and only in the last resort, after the Prussians had attacked, to withdraw across the Elbe.¹³⁵ These orders drove Gablenz distracted.¹³⁶ They had crossed with a message from him, pointing out the impossibility of such a middle course.¹³⁷ He despatched his staff officer post-haste to Vienna, to explain the situation "map in hand."¹³⁸

But the wheels of the *Ballplatz*, clogged with overwork, ground slowly. Manteuffel's troops were within an hour of Altona before word came from Vienna to wait for written instructions and a summons to Manteuffel which would produce the desired *casus belli*.¹³⁹ Before this could arrive, the Prussians had dispersed the members of the Estates, who had gathered at Itzehoe, and arrested their chairman; and Manteuffel, prodded by Bismarck, sent word on June 11 that he would take Altona on the morrow at all costs.¹⁴⁰ In this extremity, despite a second order from Vienna to hold his ground and wait for the courier,¹⁴¹ the indignant *Statthalter* took it upon himself, in the dead of night, to cross the Elbe with his brigade. As he departed from the Duchy where he had made himself beloved, scores of Holsteiners broke their sleep to cheer him enthusiastically.¹⁴² Eluding the Prussian gunboats patrolling the Elbe, the general and his troops were brought

¹³⁵ Mensdorff to Gablenz, June 7 tg.

¹³⁶ Evident from the tone of his despatch of June 9.

¹³⁷ Gablenz to Mensdorff, June 4, tg. 1:45 [p.m.?]; letter of June 6.

¹³⁸ Gablenz to Mensdorff, June 7, No. 71; June 8 tg.

¹³⁹ Gablenz to Mensdorff, June 10 tg.; Mensdorff to Gablenz, June 10 tg. 8:40 p.m., June 11 tg. 10:35 a.m.

¹⁴⁰ Gablenz to Mensdorff, June 11, tgs. 9:10 a.m., 4:37 p.m.

¹⁴¹ Mensdorff to Gablenz, June 11, tg. 10:35 a.m. At 5 p.m., Mensdorff finally telegraphed his approval of evacuation without the summons. But this tg. would hardly have reached the general before he departed.

¹⁴² About 3 a.m. (Hofmann to Mensdorff, June 12, No. 72). For many picturesque incidents, and tokens of friendship from the Prussians during the last days, see *Denkwürdigkeiten des General-Feldmarschalls Alfred Grafen von Waldersee* I (Berlin 1922), pp. 28-29; [Junck]: "Holstein unter der oesterreichischen Statthalterschaft," in *Deutsche Vierteljahrschrift* CXIX, 1867, pp. 197-199; Vilbort: *L'Oeuvre de M. de Bismarck* p. 212 ff.

safely to the Hanoverian side, and soon rejoined the main army in Bohemia.

When Mensdorff received news of the successful departure of Gablenz, he sent orders to Count Karolyi to demand his passports.¹⁴³ The final exchange of notes with Bismarck had no touch of the curtness of the document which was published in the papers.¹⁴⁴ In a courteous tone, the envoy requested his passes.¹⁴⁵ On the same day he received from Bismarck, with whom he had enacted so many trying scenes, a reply "regretting sincerely the end of his personal relations with Count Karolyi, upon which he looks back with grateful satisfaction."¹⁴⁶ Needless to say, this playlet was too peaceful for publicity.

Vienna was not behind in amenities, as Lord Bloomfield bears witness:

"Count Mensdorff called to take leave of Baron Werther the day before his departure, and as the Baron expressed on this occasion a wish to see the Emperor, His Imperial Majesty was pleased to receive him unofficially at the Palace. . . During the last painful weeks of his residence . . . [Baron Werther] was always ready to give evidence of his conciliatory disposition and of the desire which he entertained to the last of avoiding the impending war."¹⁴⁷

The Austrian chapter of Werther's *Leiden* thus came to a close.¹⁴⁸

* * * * *

Meanwhile, Mensdorff was stirring the slothful Diet to such activity as it had never seen before, and would never see again.¹⁴⁹ On June 10, Bismarck had submitted his project

¹⁴³ Mensdorff to Karolyi, June 12, tg. 10:45 a. m.

¹⁴⁴ *Staatsarchiv* XI, pp. 91-92 (No. 2315).

¹⁴⁵ Karolyi to Bismarck, June 12 (copy in Karolyi to Mensdorff, June 13, No. 47).

¹⁴⁶ Bismarck to Karolyi, June 12 (copy, *Ibid.*).

¹⁴⁷ Bloomfield to Clarendon, June 14, No. 344 (F. O. 7 Austria 708).

¹⁴⁸ Werther had the misfortune also to be ambassador in Paris at the outbreak of the Franco-Prussian war.

¹⁴⁹ For these last sessions, see Stern IX, pp. 488-491; Sybel IV, pp. 312-329 *passim*; Friedjung I, pp. 335-336, 340-343; Lange pp. 79-88; *Staatsarchiv* XI, pp. 82-85, 87-89, 92-106, 116-122.

for federal reform, providing for the division of military forces between Prussia and Bavaria; the cooperation of the German nation through a parliament chosen by universal suffrage, but with limited powers; the formation of a German fleet, the control of foreign relations and commerce in the hands of Prussia. In its first article was clearly stated the exclusion of Austria.¹⁵⁰ The gauntlet was thrown down to Franz Joseph. The next day, Austria lodged formal complaint against Prussia for her forcible acts in Holstein, which contravened the treaty of Vienna and the convention of Gastein. For the protection of the inner security of Germany, and the threatened rights of her confederates, she moved the mobilization of all the federal troops except the Prussian, and the nomination of a commander for the federal army at the earliest possible moment.¹⁵¹ The Prussian envoy, taken by surprise, raised no protest against the Austrian motion. It was decided to bring the motion to a vote on June 14.

Any German state which loyally followed the prescriptions of this Austrian motion would be guilty of a formal breach of the federal pact. By the letter of that law, such a mobilization was the last step of a process which required months to complete. But Biegeleben had long recognized the necessity of cutting straight through "hypercritical discussions over the paragraphs of the constitution" in such an emergency.¹⁵² And none of the "federally-minded" states objected, in the face of the obvious danger. They protested all the more strongly, however, against the "motivation" of the motion, and the haste with which it was to be brought to a vote.¹⁵³ Both were egregious errors on Austria's part.¹⁵⁴ Harassed by their emergency parliaments, from whom they were trying

¹⁵⁰ *G. W. V.*, p. 535. Its military provisions were similar to those which Moltke had worked out for the Gablenz plan.

¹⁵¹ *Staatsarchiv* XI, pp. 88-89.

¹⁵² Mensdorff to Blome, February 28, 1866.

¹⁵³ Werner to Mensdorff, June 8 tg.; Handel to Mensdorff, June 8 tg.; Zwierzina to Mensdorff, June 9, No. 65.

¹⁵⁴ Cf. Lange p. 81; Stern IX, p. 488; and Sybel's justified sarcasm (IV, p. 321).

to obtain funds, Beust, Pfordten, Varnbüler, Edelsheim, Dalwigk, had to meet severe attacks from those who mistrusted Austria. They could not get one penny to make war for the Gastein convention, that *bête noir* of the *Bund*. Beust pleaded in vain for retard and a better motion.¹⁵⁵

Pfordten's refusal was more serious. Placed before the ultimate decision, Pfordten could not face it squarely. Plans for mediation still swarmed in his brain. He tried a last personal appeal to Bismarck to "take counsel once more seriously with your strong soul before the decisive word . . . is spoken."¹⁵⁶ Bismarck's reply was only a further attempt to lure the Freiherr to neutrality by the offer of greater territory and influence.¹⁵⁷ Not only did Pfordten waver on the brink, but his particularism drove him to remodel the Austrian motion to apply only to the four federal corps. Thus he remained true to his disastrous policy of splitting the forces of Germany. His alterations of the text however saved the day for Austria, for he struck out the mention of Gastein, and moved the federal mobilization "to prevent a disturbance of the peace of the Confederation."

To these changes Mensdorff gave his ready approval,—he could not do otherwise; and he issued by telegram another stirring call for unity.

"The time for mediation is past, events are on the march, and timid doubts can only work harm. We are certain of France's neutrality, and our German confederates will surely promote their own best interests if, without carping scruples, but with timely cooperation from their brave troops, they assure the preponderance over Prussia."¹⁵⁸

On the morning of the 14th of June, neither Austria nor Prussia, nor probably Pfordten, was certain what the result of the voting would be. Bismarck had provided Savigny with instructions for either contingency, but in both cases he was

¹⁵⁵ Werner to Mensdorff, June 8 tg.

¹⁵⁶ Sybel IV, p. 317.

¹⁵⁷ Tg. to Reuss, June 13 (*G. W. V.*, p. 547). Reuss rightly refused to present the offer to Pfordten.

¹⁵⁸ Circular tg. June 12, to Munich, Dresden, Hanover, Stuttgart, Karlsruhe, Cassel, and Darmstadt.

to declare that, since Austria had broken the rules of the Diet, Prussia would no longer be bound by them.¹⁵⁹ The Austrian delegate had orders, if the motion for mobilization were voted down, simply to call attention to the fact that "a majority of states had refused to join with Austria in opposing the unconstitutional actions of Prussia."¹⁶⁰ This move did not prove necessary. Though the Diet refused to name a federal commander as yet, nine votes rallied to the support of the Bavarian motion, and only five joined themselves to Prussia's vote.¹⁶¹ Beside the loyal Austrian friends, Saxony, Würtemberg, Hesse-Darmstadt, Nassau, the victorious faction included Hanover, Hesse-Cassel, and the sixteenth curie of little states. The neutrality of Baden—she cast no vote—was a disappointment from a state where the majority of the ministers, the *Landtag*, and the populace had been won to the Austro-federal cause.¹⁶²

After the voting had ceased, Savigny arose to indict the *Bund* and its president. He called attention once more to the Prussian plan for a new confederation, and soon left the room, amid widespread expressions of protest against Prussia's breach of the "indissoluble" Confederation. No others had the courage to follow him. With mingled feelings, but with due appreciation for the gravity of the occasion, the remaining delegates heard in silence Kübeck's last warning to them to "fulfil their duties to each other and to the German nation by standing together firmly upon the ground of the

¹⁵⁹ *G. W. V.*, p. 550 No. 402; *Stern* IX, p. 491. The Prussian declaration had no better logical foundation than the Austrian motion. (See Lange's trenchant criticism, p. 87).

¹⁶⁰ Mensdorff to Kübeck, June 14 tg.

¹⁶¹ The vote was nine against six.

¹⁶² This policy of neutrality, due entirely to Grand Duke Friedrich and contrary to the popular wishes, was paradoxical for a liberal sovereign who believed in popular government. For his final attempt to interest Munich, Dresden, and Berlin in a compromise on Augustenburg, see Werner to Mensdorff, June 2, No. 66A, supplementing Oncken: *Friedrich von Baden* I, pp. 506-531.

federal constitution."¹⁶³ The insecurity of that foundation, they were soon to experience with a vengeance.

* * * * *

The approach of war was greeted by the Austrian public with jubilation. "These people have never forgotten the conduct of Fred[erick] the Great towards Austria," wrote the British ambassador, "and a thirst for revenge rankles in their breasts at . . . the chance of humiliating . . . the Power that now seeks to lower Austria in the eyes of Europe."¹⁶⁴ The fire-eaters among the public, in the bureaux, and at court cried loudly for the reduction of Prussia to its position before the Seven Years' War.¹⁶⁵ They wished to enlarge the German *Mittelstaaten* so as to provide strong counterweights.¹⁶⁶ Such was also the tendency of Austria's treaty with France and the hints to her German allies. The most sanguine expected to force this humbled Prussia into an unremodelled Confederation, or one as close to the *Fürstentag* plan as Louis Napoleon would permit. The *Zollverein* would be abolished, or enlarged with Austria as director.¹⁶⁷ And for a generation, at least, the German states and their protector would be freed from the "Prussian menace."¹⁶⁸

But the more sensible citizens, if they expected victory at all, foresaw that its fruits could not be plentiful for Austria.¹⁶⁹ Gablenz and others did not want to make war for the profit of Louis Napoleon.¹⁷⁰ Mensdorff saw no chance for anything

¹⁶³ *Staatsarchiv* XI, p. 104.

¹⁶⁴ Bloomfield to Clarendon, letter of May 17 (F. O. 356 Bloomfield Papers 39).

¹⁶⁵ Cf. Gablenz to Esterhazy, letter of April 20, 1866 (HHS, *Nachlass Gablenz*).

¹⁶⁶ Count Münster: *Political Sketches of the State of Europe* pp. 96-97. The idea had formed part of Schwarzenberg's plans.

¹⁶⁷ Memorandum of the minister of commerce for the minister of foreign affairs (Beer: *Die österreichische Handelspolitik* p. 378).

¹⁶⁸ Cf. remarks of Baron von Neurath, minister of justice of Würtemberg (Handel to Mensdorff, March 5, 1866, postscript to No. 14).

¹⁶⁹ Gablenz to Esterhazy, letter of April 20, 1866; Blome to Mensdorff, letter of May 20 (Appendix A, No. 19).

¹⁷⁰ Gablenz to Metternich, letter of March 16 (HHS, *Nachlass Gablenz*); Mensdorff to Blome, letter of May 19 quoted in Blome to Mensdorff, letter of May 20 (Appendix A, No. 19).

but a "*replâtreage*" until death took the French schemer from the stage.¹⁷¹ This was the opinion of many in the Hofburg and outside. Count Esterhazy, upon whose shoulders fell the burden of drawing a new map of central Europe, threw up his hands with the despairing cry, "I haven't the ghost of an idea on the subject."¹⁷² These cooler heads however formed a small minority only. "Never has there been a moment more propitious for Austria to exalt herself permanently at the expense of her enemies," wrote the liberal Moritz von Kaiserfeld.¹⁷³ The papers are so full of insults, said Blome, that one cannot read them with a good conscience.¹⁷⁴ Even the national parties among the Czechs and Hungarians cheered the Austrian jingoists.

In Prussia there was much less evidence of rejoicing. There "the straw was damp,"¹⁷⁵ — but it would not be long in catching fire. When someone called Bismarck's attention to the great number of peace meetings being held throughout Prussia, he gave the characteristic reply: "Events change public opinion, and a battle won, or even a battle lost, strangely alters men's minds."¹⁷⁶

Though Austria had severed diplomatic relations, and Prussia had now been outlawed, still Franz Joseph did not strike. He had repeatedly promised his fellow-sovereigns that he would not begin hostilities; he was determined not to make the mistake of 1859, but rather to leave to Prussia the "honor" of firing the first shot. It was precisely this honor which Bismarck did not covet.¹⁷⁷ He had tried half a dozen

¹⁷¹ Cf. Mensdorff's letter to Ernst II, March 31, 1866 (copy in PGS); Vogt pp. 93-94.

¹⁷² Esterhazy to Mensdorff, letter of April 26, 1866 (Redlich: *Reichsproblem* II, p. 775); Bernhard von Meyer: *Erlebnisse* p. 51.

¹⁷³ Krones' *Moritz von Kaiserfeld* pp. 244-245.

¹⁷⁴ Reuss to Bismarck, May 1, 1866, No. 84 *Vertraulich* (HAA).

¹⁷⁵ Louis Schneider: *Aus dem Leben Kaiser Wilhelms*, vol. I, p. 225.

¹⁷⁶ Wright to Seward, Berlin June 17, 1866, No. 35 (Department of State, Washington, D. C.).

¹⁷⁷ G. W. V., p. 532. On the night of June 15, Bismarck said sophistically to Lord Loftus, "that the entry of Prussian troops into Saxony and Hanover

expedients, during the last fortnight, to induce the Austrians or the Italians to make the first move. All in vain. Finally, on the night of June 15, Bismarck persuaded William to take the bit between his teeth,—Prussian troops entered the land of King Johann and Beust. Meeting no resistance from the Saxons, who had departed to Bohemia,¹⁷⁸ they soon arrived at the Austrian frontier. As Franz Joseph still refused to attack, and Bismarck refused to issue a formal declaration of war, which would document Prussia's aggression against a brother state, King William was compelled to find a subterfuge. The Prussian Crown Prince, in command of the foremost troops, was accordingly ordered to send to the nearest Austrian commander a simple declaration of a "state of war," and to cross the line with his men.¹⁷⁹ In this informal manner began the invasion of Bohemia on June 21, and the war for the hegemony of Germany was transferred from the chancelleries at last to the field of battle. Franz Joseph, with his eyes on the past, had already issued his call "to my peoples" — "*An Meine Völker*"¹⁸⁰ — but Bismarck, with his eyes toward the future, addressed the words of his King "to the German nation."¹⁸¹

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To the astonishment of Europe, Moltke's armies swept all before them. Catching the half-formed battalions of the

would not imply hostilities with Austria. Prussia would not take the offensive but would wait an attack on the part of Austria." (Loftus to Clarendon, June 16, No. 308. F. O. 64 Prussia 595).

¹⁷⁸ Simultaneously with Gablenz' retreat, Franz Joseph had sent Colonel Beck to persuade Benedek and the Saxons to join forces in Bohemia at once. But both had refused, for the moment. For Beck's mission, see Friedjung II, p. 601; Glaise-Horstenau: *Franz Joseph's Weggeföhrt* pp. 99-104; and Beck's report to Crenneville, June 12, 1866 (*Kriegsarchiv, Militärkanzlei*).

¹⁷⁹ *Kaiser Friedrich III. Tagebücher von 1848-1866* p. 427.

¹⁸⁰ *Staatsarchiv* XI, pp. 125-128. For the authorship of this proclamation, see Bernhard von Meyer: *Erlebnisse* II, p. 56. Count Blome urged Mensdorff to issue a "manifesto to the German nation" relating Prussia's violent actions, and calling for war in behalf of the "*Recht und Freiheit Deutschlands*" (Blome to Mensdorff, letter of June 14).

¹⁸¹ *G. W. V.*, pp. 551-552; *Staatsarchiv* XI, pp. 123-124.

Mittelstaaten before they could unite, the Prussians cornered and defeated the Hanoverians, overran Cassel, beat the South Germans, and entered Frankfurt in triumph. The rump Diet had fled to the Austrian dominions, where it continued to pass resolutions until the peace-treaty ended its half-century of unhonored, but not unuseful, existence.

On the southern battlefield, the mistakes of the Italian leaders and the ability of the Austrian commanders, led to the encouraging victory of Custoza, and in the Adriatic, to the most brilliant naval engagement since Trafalgar,—the battle of Lissa, won by Tegetthof. Thus the Austrian record of victories over Italians remained unsullied.

But these were poor compensation for Sadowa. Within two weeks of the first exchange of shots between Prussians and Austrians, Benedek's great host was defeated and in retreat. The victors themselves were stunned by their success. Königgrätz was the almost inevitable consequence of Franz Joseph's conservatism in failing to keep abreast of new inventions, in appointing commanders to fit dynastic purposes, and especially in fighting two enemies at once.

Austria's call for the assistance of Napoleon very nearly secured French intervention. If Napoleon had been the man of 1863, he might have mobilized troops on the Prussian border, gained Venetia for Italy, Upper Silesia for Austria, and the Saar Basin for himself. But he had reckoned on a long war, and, racked with pain, he could not rapidly shift his combinations. Franz Joseph alone felt unable to resist further.

The armistice of Nikolsburg was transformed into the peace of Prague on August 26. Excluded from Germany and Italy, Franz Joseph had to agree to Prussia's annexation of the Duchies, Hanover, Hesse-Cassel, Nassau, and Frankfurt, and to recognize his rival as head of a new North German Confederation. This seemed to the Emperor a bitter price to pay for his loyalty to the Prussian alliance and the conservative fellowship of divine-right monarchs. Little did he realize what pains it had cost Bismarck to keep his sovereign and the

generals from dictating severer terms in the Hofburg itself.

After a period of inner despair and disillusionment, Franz Joseph recovered his sang-froid. He set himself with vigor to the long overdue task of fundamental internal reconstruction. The unfortunate Mensdorff and Esterhazy were dismissed with more or less curtness, and Belcredi soon followed. In the foreign office he set Beust, the most brilliant and consistent champion of the cause of the Confederation against Prussian aggrandizement. Whether Franz Joseph's choice was due to the necessity of securing an impartial non-Austrian for the compromise with Hungary, or whether the leading motive was to retrieve what he had lost in Germany, only the following years could tell.

The "Seven Weeks War" was the shortest and yet historically the most important of the wars of the nineteenth century, because, at the expense of an outworn system, it assured modern Italy's existence and created modern Germany. "There has never yet . . . been recorded in history such a collapse as that of Austria," wrote Lord Clarendon, "France is no longer the first military Power."¹⁸²

The war of 1866 has been interpreted both as a carefully prepared "Cabinet-affair,"¹⁸³ and as a "revolution put through by revolutionary means."¹⁸⁴ It has been called the victory of the needle-gun, the triumph of the Prussian school-master. These judgments are all correct, but fragmentary. In the last analysis, it was not the victory of one political system over another,—both governmental machines were essentially of the same type. But it was the victory of the national ideal over that of the universal monarchy, a Prusso-German nation over an Austro-German federation of nationalities.¹⁸⁶

¹⁸² Clarendon to Cowley, letter of July 31, 1866 (Wellesley [ed.]: *The Paris Embassy during the Second Empire* pp. 314-315).

¹⁸³ Moltke's oft-quoted dictum.

¹⁸⁴ Engels' remark, cited by Wendel: *Bismarck und Serbien im Jahre 1866* p. 9.

¹⁸⁵ This has been expressed nowhere more succinctly than by Heinrich Ritter von Srbik in *Schönere Zukunft* III, 1927-1928, p. 105.

And in another way, it was the result of the supremacy of a group of geniuses over a set of men of average ability, each group dominated by a single individual. It was the triumph of a Bismarck over a Franz Joseph.

CHAPTER XIII

BISMARCK, FRANZ JOSEPH, AND THE WAR QUESTION

"Wir waren sehr ehrlich, aber sehr dumm." FRANZ JOSEPH
(*Briefe an seine Mutter* p. 358).

"Die Oesterreicher zu schlagen, war keine Kunst. . . . Die Schwierigkeit war, meinen König über den Graben zu bringen." BISMARCK
(Vitzthum: *London, Gastein, und Sadowa* pp. 191-192).

THE question of the responsibility for the war of 1866 revolves less around the relative responsibility of Bismarck or Franz Joseph, than around the respective shares of various advisers of the Emperor in causing Austria's fatal participation. There can be little disputing the fact that the aggressor was Prussia, the conscious instigator Bismarck.¹ In spite of Austria's sudden burst of martial spirit in April and May 1866, few people in Europe or America at that time failed to place the responsibility on the northern power.² Not only impartial foreigners, but Prussians, friends of Bismarck, his own most confidential secretaries appreciated his ingenious and successful efforts to provoke Austria to war.³ And most

¹ Cf. Erich Marcks: *Kaiser Wilhelm I*, pp. 225-226; Bismarck's letter to Ernst II of Coburg, June 9, 1866 (*G. W. V*, pp. 533-534).

² The evidence is extensive. See especially Keudell: *Fürst und Fürstin Bismarck* p. 257; Roon: *Denkwürdigkeiten* II, p. 409; Gazley: *American Opinion of German Unification* p. 185. British opinion was summarized in Bernstorff's reports (March 6, 1866, in *G. W. V*, p. 390; March 30, to King William, No. 96 *très réservée*, HAA); French opinion in J. Klaczko: "La crise en Allemagne," in *Revue des deux Mondes* LXIII, May 1, 1866, p. 216; Pfordten expressed South German opinion in his *Antrag* for King Ludwig, June 8, 1866 (Doebnerl: *Bayern und Deutschland im 19ten Jahrhundert* p. 124) and his remarks to the Prussian envoy (Reuss to Bismarck, March 9, 1866, No. 16 *Vertraulich*, HAA; cited in chapter xi above); the Tsar's opinion is given in Schweinitz' *Denkwürdigkeiten* I, pp. 214, 218; etc.

³ Keudell's opinion is expressed in his book: *Fürst und Fürstin Bismarck* p. 257 and in Radowitz' *Aufzeichnungen* I, p. 88; Abeken's opinion in Schweinitz' *Denkwürdigkeiten* I, p. 203; Max Duncker's opinion in Bernhardt's *Tagebücher* VI, p. 202, and *Max Dunckers politischer Briefwechsel* p. 404; etc. Bismarck admitted that Austria did not want war at this moment (letter to William, April 22, 1866: Kohl: *Anhang* I, pp. 136-137; *G. W. V*, p. 462).

historians on both sides of the line have since united in that judgment.

BISMARCK AS A FRIEND OF AUSTRIA

The extrusion of Austria from Germany and the realization of Prussian hegemony as a nucleus for a national state was not far short of the highest goal that Bismarck had set before himself during his Frankfurt days.⁴ It was his desire to achieve this exclusion of the Habsburg state by peaceful means if possible. But he knew well that "Austria, like the Pope, displayed great tenacity even in desperate situations,"⁵ and he was under no illusion that Franz Joseph would relinquish his inherited position and traditions unless forced to do so.⁶ But war might not be immediately practicable for Prussia, for internal reasons (the King) or for external reasons (the foreign powers). In such a contingency he saw several stages on the route, at any of which he could collect his resources for a further advance.

This system of a graduated series of objectives is well illustrated by Bismarck's handling of the Schleswig-Holstein question.⁷ From the first critical moment, Bismarck's aim was to annex the Duchies to Prussia. But both internal conditions (the King's attitude) and external conditions (the objections of the powers) made such a solution at first problematical. Bismarck therefore had to temporize and work secretly

⁴ My indebtedness to the well known works of Erich Marcks, Max Lenz, and especially Erich Brandenburg will be evident, though I have maintained as much independence as possible. One cannot but feel that the recent trend of German historians, due to the publication of Bismarck's *Gesammelte Werke*, is a temporary one that will change again when more foreign documents are published. A three-dimensional view of Bismarck's diplomacy can only lead, it seems to me, to an interpretation similar to that of the eminent trio of historians named above.

⁵ Remark to the British envoy in Berlin (Napier to Russell, April 21, 1865, No. 115 Most Confidential. F. O. 64 Prussia 574).

⁶ Bismarck's letter to Bernstorff, June 28, 1862 (*G. W.* III, p. 383); Bismarck's letter to Auerswald, July 28, 1860, cited by Zechlin (*Bismarck und die Grundlegung der deutschen Grossmacht* p. 380).

⁷ Steefel: *The Schleswig-Holstein Question*, *passim*.

toward his objective through the stages of Personal Union, the February demands, and the Gastein convention. He did not force events; by constant watchfulness and ingenious but unobtrusive manipulation, he guided them toward his goal, and he attained it in the end.

Bismarck's strategy was similar in pursuit of his larger objective. If he could not attain the hegemony of Germany at one bound, he might secure parity in the Diet; if not parity, perhaps the promise of the military command in war time; if not that, possibly a sort of informal parity such as Metternich had permitted. Once Bismarck achieved one stage, he would exploit his position to reach the next. Only in this sense, as a way-station on the road to German hegemony can the dualism of which he so often spoke be interpreted,—not as an end and aim.⁸ At some point along this route, Bismarck expected to profit by an Italian attack upon Austria to achieve his higher ambition more rapidly. But since Napoleon, playing another game, kept Italy from attacking Austria, Bismarck saw himself forced to fire the powder magazine. He proceeded with his usual circumspection, arranging situations in which his monarch or the Austrians would seem to force the issue, and keeping for himself the ostensible role of mediator rather than instigator.

This skilful diplomacy, and Bismarck's consummate ability to convince by the spoken and written word, misled for a time certain contemporaries like Karolyi, Blome, and Esterhazy. And more recently, some historians have discovered in Bismarck's handling of the alliance with Austria a sincere effort to make dualism work, and an earnest desire for cooperation and understanding.⁹ It is not strange that after reading a large volume of Bismarck's vibrant and masterly instructions,

⁸ This interpretation of Bismarck's dualism as tactical only, was held by Brandenburg, Lenz, Marcks, Meinecke, Friedjung, Grundmann, Herre, Ruville, Schlüssler, Wertheimer, and others. The opposite view is taken by Sybel, Delbrück, Pahncke, Rathlef, Thimme, and more recently by Frahm and Marcks.

⁹ Thimme was the first to return to Sybel's point of view. His conversion has been followed to a lesser extent, and with variations, by Frahm, Marcks, Mommsen, Steefel, Bibl, and doubtless others.

one should be moved to sympathy and feel a sincerity in his indignation against Austria's "unjust treatment of her loyal ally." Read in a less rosy light, Bismarck's despatches from 1862 to 1866 become the arguments of a clever lawyer pleading his case against Austria before a judge who had strong preconceived notions to overcome. Most of these documents were designed for the King's eye as much as for foreign courts.¹⁰ Quite apart from this special object, is it not an elementary principle of nationalistic diplomacy to maintain the pacific nature of one's own intentions and the hostile nature of one's opponent's? Bismarck's use of this principle was in keeping with the high standard of his diplomatic technique. Moreover, he had everything to gain if he could persuade Austria to make great concessions without the use of force. He allowed himself something over a year in which to indulge in the luxury of mere words. But during those months of 1864 and 1865, he was not only not giving away anything to Austria, but he was also preparing the diplomatic and military ammunition to use against his ally when words failed, as he foresaw they would fail.

One test of the sincerity of Bismarck's desire to cooperate with Austria is his attitude toward compensations for his ally. Did he ever attempt to make the alliance mutually advantageous so that Austria would feel at home in it and wish to perpetuate it, as she did the Dual Alliance of 1879? Bismarck hinted often at such rewards: aid against France, a guarantee of Austria's possessions, a small territorial cession. But when pressed to come to concrete terms, he always escaped on the ground of the King's insuperable objections. Did Bismarck ever seriously propose any of these to his sovereign? The alliance compacts may be dismissed at once; they were contrary to Bismarck's fundamental policy of keeping a free hand toward France. As to a cession of land, there

¹⁰ What is generally acknowledged to be true of his Biarritz letter of October 1865 is in varying degree true of his entire official correspondence. Frahm and Marcks admit this motivation for Bismarck's pleas for conservatism, but not for his dualism.

is no good evidence that Bismarck ever made an effort to secure William's consent to a measure so repugnant to him, and one which the public would have considered a defeat for the ministry.¹¹ His only serious offers to Austria were money, and a partition of the Duchies. To accept either would have undermined Austria's prestige in Germany and made her more dependent than ever on Prussia. The question is not whether Austria would not have been wiser to make these humiliating concessions, but whether Bismarck's offers betray a sincere desire to conciliate his ally. His proposals always had a "catch" in them which made them unacceptable, as Pfordten once said¹²—and Pfordten was an admirer of Bismarck.

Bismarck's offers to Austria, and to Bavaria too, bear a family resemblance to his dangling of Rhine territory before Napoleon. If the latter hints were purely tactical, why not the former also? Bismarck could have gone far toward satisfying Franz Joseph by a more conciliatory policy toward the Diet and the German states,¹³ by attempting to harmonize the mutual relations rather than by constantly aggravating them. But such a policy, recognizing Austria's supremacy, was inconceivable from Bismarck's point of view. It would have contradicted his past and his entire program and platform. His struggle with the Prussian parliament forced him to make spectacular gains, or admit failure. "I know my Prussians well," he once said, "they have something of the Frenchman in them. Just give them a little fame and influence abroad, and you can do anything with them."¹⁴ He could not afford to make concessions to Austria even if he had desired to do so.

Those historians who believe in the "inner seriousness" of

¹¹ Bismarck's assertions to Karolyi cannot be considered good evidence in this case.

¹² Reuss to Bismarck, letter of March 27, 1866 (HAA).

¹³ Cf. Rechberg's letters to Bismarck in September and October 1864 (*Oesterreichische Rundschau* XLIII, 1915, Heft 5, pp. 199-209) and Hofrat von Hofmann's remarks to Manteuffel (Appendix A, No. 11).

¹⁴ Friesen: *Erinnerungen* II, p. 130.

Bismarck's attempts to conciliate Austria, point to his actions during the crisis of May to August 1865. They stress particularly that Bismarck gave conciliatory advice in the council of May 29; that Bismarck's note of July 21 to Austria was not the ultimatum that Sybel called it; and that Bismarck decided for peace at Gastein. The first contention falls to the ground when it is shown that the published excerpts from the minutes of the council do not give a correct view of Bismarck's advice to the King,¹⁵ as may easily be seen by referring to the complete report, in the Appendix below (No. 8). A more correct epitome is somewhat as follows:

A war with Austria is inevitable; it would be safer now than later; it would not only give Prussia the Duchies, but also settle the German question in Prussia's interest, the King could be sure of the joyful support of his counsellors. Nevertheless only the King could take the responsibility for a war; if he does not wish to do that, an agreement with Austria could be purchased by giving up the military clauses; but the Prussian public would consider this a defeat; and war would merely be postponed.¹⁶

All the arguments which could stimulate the King's appetite were alluringly displayed on one side.¹⁷ On the other, the King was asked to give up the one condition which he desired above all others, the military control of the Duchies. Bismarck had to cover the war-pill with sugar, and present a bitter alternative in order to get the peace-loving King to take the medicine. But the King as usual took neither. How Bismarck continued the negotiations with Austria in such a form as to prevent an agreement, has been related in chapter vii above. Nor is it true that he expected better terms from the new conservative Austrian ministry which was formed in July

¹⁵ Two small excerpts, published with comments by Thimme, in *G. W. V.*, pp. 189-190.

¹⁶ Protocol of the council of May 29, 1865 (printed in full in Appendix A, No. 8).

¹⁷ Bismarck stated them even more forcefully to Max Duncker a few days before the council. Duncker concluded that Bismarck really wanted war (Bernhardi VI, p. 202).

1865.¹⁸ He did not send an ultimatum on July 21, because he had already sent one on July 11, and the Austrians were ready to parley. If the parley did not end in a gain for Prussia and a loss for Austria, Bismarck would certainly have exerted himself to the utmost to bring war, for the only alternative was humiliation and resignation.

But the Gastein compromise brought him only one step nearer his goal, which was still far away. Why then did he accept it and decide for peace? Because it was always his policy to let events ripen, not to overhasten them. The King was content with a diplomatic victory, and ready to accept much less than Bismarck wished, Manteuffel urgently advised concluding with Blome. Gastein was Bismarck's last compromise with the Prussian peace party.¹⁹ The war could be safely postponed till 1866, but not longer. Consequently he accepted, without enthusiasm, an arrangement which advanced his policy, and did not cut off any chance for war, but in reality left many openings.

Each partner in the Austro-Prussian alliance wished to exploit that association primarily for his own interests; Austria for external protection, and not for dualism in Germany at the cost of the smaller states, except temporarily from December to May 1864; Prussia for dualism in Germany and domination of the Diet, not for external protection except temporarily while there was danger of foreign intervention from December to August 1864. The alliance was thus workable to mutual benefit only during a crisis in which Austria and Prussia were confronted by the opposition both of foreign powers and of the German states,—a very rare contingency. It was not workable during times of peace unless one power or the other would accept his ally's point of view and subordinate

¹⁸ This supposition of Thimme's is disproved by Bismarck's letter to Roon, July 3, 1865 (Kohl: *Bismarck-Jahrbuch* V, p. 188). Not long before, Herr von Thile had told Count Chotek that the entire Prussian court now believed that all Austrians, *including the conservatives* [the italics are mine], were hostile to Prussia (Chotek to Mensdorff, June 19, 1865, No. 41C).

¹⁹ Ruville: "Bismarck und die grossdeutsche Gedanke," in *Forschungen zur brandenburgischen und preussischen Geschichte* XVI, 1903, p. 435 ff.

his own. In practice, Bismarck exploited Austria's isolation and blunders so cleverly that the alliance worked out entirely to Prussia's advantage and to Austria's disadvantage. As Bismarck interpreted it and expected his ally to carry it out, it meant that he, not Franz Joseph, was to be its director;²⁰ that Austria had to cooperate with Prussia to reduce the *Mittelstaaten* to submission even at the point of the sword;²¹ that Austria might flirt with England but not with France ("it was Prussia's task to manage France").²² Finally, it meant that Austria must grant Prussia the rewards she demanded, and must take humiliating payment or unwritten hints of aid in return. In short, Bismarck wished to use the alliance as a stage from which to press farther toward his goal. He was unwilling to make any sacrifice of independence in order to preserve a dualistic relationship.²³

Thus by ingeniously seizing a temporary emergency, Bismarck created a new relationship which, when the emergency had passed, bore more heavily on his ally and raised Prussia's relative position. But when Austria made it clear that she, too, intended to derive equal profit from the alliance, and when Bismarck had utilized it sufficiently to alienate the King almost completely from his fellow sovereign, the Prussian minister-president unhesitatingly scrapped the relationship.²⁴

To conclude,—the friendly demand of one state for rights or interests or territory which another possesses by virtue of historic events and generally accepted treaties cannot be taken to indicate a sincere desire for peace when backed by the threat of war, however veiled the threat may be. Bismarck did not desire war any more than the majority of states-

²⁰ Cf. Lenz: *Geschichte Bismarcks* pp. 261-262; Zechlin p. 382.

²¹ Driving the federal troops from Holstein, November 1864.

²² Bismarck's words to Biegeleben in April 1864 (Steefel p. 322).

²³ Cf. Zechlin p. 381.

²⁴ A remarkable forecast of this policy is found in Bismarck's remarks to Benedetti in March 1865 (*G. W. V.*, pp. 118-120). Bismarck repudiated the spirit of the alliance in February 1866 so that he could make his alliance with Italy (*G. W. V.*, p. 388; see also Mensdorff's *Vortrag*, Appendix A, No. 13). Yet he maintained the validity of article 5 which bound his ally.

men desire it. But he desired a unified Germany under Prussian control. From the beginning he doubted that this could be obtained without a war. He tried very hard to obtain it by argument, but his conciliation did not go to the extent of actual concessions, nor hardly to the smallest modification of policy. He probably would not have delayed the contest as long as he did if he could have drawn the King with him any earlier. After the Gastein crisis, and the "exile" of Man-
teuffel, Bismarck pressed almost unreservedly toward war.²⁵

AUSTRIAN AIMS

Bismarck's offensive against Austria was the third that had emanated from Prussia since 1848. In the very nature of the German situation, the nationalist *Kleindeutschtum* initiated the action against the South-German *Grossdeutsch* federalism. The Radowitz-Prussian offensive had preceded and called forth the Schwarzenberg counter-offensive. The offensive of the *Nationalverein* and that of Bernstorff likewise preceded and called forth the Schmerling-*Reformverein* and the Biegeleben-*Fürstentag* counter-offensive. Bismarck's produced Franz Joseph's. It is hardly correct to interpret any of these three crises as a case of "two offensives meeting"; it was rather a question of an aggressive-offensive arousing a defensive-offensive. In the case of Austria in 1866, it would seem more correct to omit the designation "offensive" altogether.

In 1864, Austria was temporarily a satiated state. All she asked was to be allowed to preserve her position in Germany, and behind the Quadrilateral, in peace, while attempting to solve a very complex internal problem. She had, to be sure, in the back of her mind certain hopes for the future. She wished eventually to regain North Italy, to assist the Pope and the King of Naples to get back their territories, and so to defeat "Piedmont" and France that the spirit of liberal nationalism would not raise its head to plague her again within

* The Gablenz negotiations present no evidence for a desire to conciliate Austria on a mutually advantageous basis

a generation. She hoped, too, that Prussia would "listen to reason" and join in a stronger, more inclusive federation of Germany. But these hopes were distant and nebulous in 1864. Without desires for aggression or territorial expansion, seriously weakened by war and internal dissension, Austria saw herself confronted by two rapacious enemies eagerly awaiting an opportunity to rob her of what she had long possessed, and by two other powerful neighbors, France and Russia, who had no love for her.

In this situation there were logically four alternatives, one of which Austrian diplomacy might pursue: it might try to retain Austria's boundaries, position, and influence unimpaired; it might retain the German position intact by yielding her position in Italy; it might save the latter by yielding the former; or it might recognize the rights and the strength of German and Italian nationalism, withdraw from both positions, and enable Austria to devote her energies to consolidation and Balkan expansion. This last policy would have required superhuman prescience and self-abnegation, and could not have been expected from any ruler, especially from a Habsburg. The second and third alternatives were not only *within* the realm of possibility; one or the other could have been carried out without the formal recognition of the principle of nationality, without more than momentary loss of prestige; and one or the other was actually proposed, or steps toward either were suggested, by nearly every one of Franz Joseph's advisors.

Yet the Emperor chose the first alternative, the *Erhaltungspolitik*. As a result of this policy, Austria was reduced to a position worse than the fourth alternative; by incorrect calculation of the possible, she was forced to relinquish both the second and third alternatives; by trying to keep all, Franz Joseph lost all. This chosen alternative, the highest of all, would have been a sheer impossibility for even a Metternich or a Schwarzenberg to attain *in anno* 1864. Schwarzenberg's task had been a degree more difficult than Metternich's, because of the growth of Prussian and German nationalism in

the revolutions of 1848-1850. But Franz Joseph's task in 1864 was many degrees harder than Schwarzenberg's, because in addition to the growth of nationalism, Prussia gained in 1858 a more determined and less admiring ruler; Prussia gained in 1862 the most able of anti-Austrian diplomats; Austria lost in 1854-1856 the friendship of Russia. Not even the superb genius of Schwarzenberg and the Austrian generals of 1848-1849 had been able to restore the Empire to its historic position by Austria's own resources. The Emperor was securely resealed on the throne only by the aid of an outside great power, and because of the impotence of France. In 1864-1866, the friend was no more, and the foe in Paris had become the leading power in Europe. What even a Schwarzenberg had not been able to do without foreign alliances, Franz Joseph aspired to do practically alone.

The tragedy of 1859 was not the Austrian defeat, but the fact that Austria was only half-defeated. Her losses simply depleted her revenues without diminishing her ambitions or turning her policy into more permanently practical channels. Yet it should have been the danger signal for a complete stock-taking, and reappraisal of fundamental aims. It mattered little whether Austria chose to make concessions to Prussia to retain her remaining possessions in Italy, or to France and Italy to keep her place in Germany. Austria's religion pulled her southward, her culture and dominant nationality northward. Whichever course she chose to pursue, it was essential that she pursue it courageously, consistently, and whole-heartedly. "A passive planlessness which is content to be left alone cannot be maintained in the middle of Europe," Bismarck counselled a friend,²⁸ but he might well have said the same to Franz Joseph.

If Austria preferred to retain her position in Italy, and perhaps ultimately to regain what she had lost, a war with France was inevitable. For this, she must have Prussia's

²⁸ Bismarck to Gerlach in 1857, cited by Lenz in *Das Bismarck-Jahr* (Berlin 1915) p. 129.

cordial alliance. The opportunity to obtain this on the most favorable terms came in 1860 and 1861 when the friendly Prince Hohenzollern and Baron Schleinitz headed the Berlin ministry. It would have cost real concessions, and the abandonment of the Buol-Schmerling-Biegeleben policy for that of Metternich and Rechberg. But this was not done. Austria brusquely broke off negotiations. After that, Bernstorff and Bismarck raised Prussia's terms for an alliance. But it was still possible during Bismarck's tenure, by timely concessions and a friendly attitude, to secure King William's gratitude to such an extent as to postpone at least for a number of years the conflict which Bismarck threatened to provoke. By doling out favors, the Austrians might have tided over the most dangerous period of weakness.

On the other hand, if Austria chose to retain her position in Germany, she must have executed as great a diplomatic revolution as Kaunitz persuaded his sovereign to stage a century before. By a timely sacrifice of Venetia and recognition of Italy, accompanied by a policy of friendship toward Napoleon and Victor Emanuel, Austria could probably have gained Napoleon's guarantee of the patrimony of St. Peter, and an Italian renunciation of the Trentino and Trieste. In order not to recognize formally the principle of nationality, the sale of Venetia could be considered a mutually beneficial reconciliation between the two neighboring dynasties of Habsburg and Savoy, consummated through the friendly mediation of Napoleon III and consecrated by reciprocal visits among the monarchs. Austrian policy should have been public proclamation of the old principles but private recognition of the new. The serious threat of such a reorientation would have undermined Bismarck's entire policy of extorting concessions from Austria with French aid. In the game of balancing between France and the German rival, Franz Joseph had a better hand than Bismarck if he had only been willing to play it in good time. It is true that the Kaiser did finally play his ace, but it proved too late,—it was taken by Napoleon's lowest trump, and lost the game for Austria. Bismarck would hardly have

undertaken a war single-handed against Austria, even with the possible aid of the Hungarians. Neither Russia nor England would aid him in a war provoked against the rest of Europe. One can hardly resist the conclusion that by conciliating France and Italy, Franz Joseph could have prevented a Prussian victory during the 1860's, gained an opportunity for internal consolidation, and secured Bismarck's fall.

In fine, the Emperor had to choose, as Karolyi said, "whether it was to the interest of Austria that Prussia should be powerful as a good and safe ally or whether she should not be powerful as a possible adversary."²⁷ Since the core of the Empire was German, the better choice from Austria's own point of view would probably have been to satisfy Italian nationalism in Austria's rear and seek to retain the connection with Germany. From the point of view of the welfare of the greatest number of Germans in central Europe, probably the same is true. For the satisfaction of German nationalism, however, none but the Prussian solution promised great success. For the welfare of Europe as a whole, both the Austrian-*Grossdeutsch* and the Prussian-*Kleindeutsch* solutions offered advantages and disadvantages. But for Austria herself, the definite abandonment of the old dream was essential to the salvation of the monarchy.

It is easy to criticize the diplomacy of Franz Joseph. But it must be remembered that the Europe before the cataclysmic changes of 1866-1871 was largely living amid illusions. Though the bloom had been taken off the reputation of Louis Napoleon by the Polish fiasco, he was still rated as the diplomatic master mind of Europe, backed by the most powerful army and controlling the underground forces of revolution throughout the continent. Austria, though temporarily weakened, was looked upon as a power second only to France. The glamor of the Schwarzenberg recovery still clung to her to a certain extent, and her army's reputation, personified in

²⁷ Karolyi's remark to Lord Napier (Napier to Russell, February 11, 1865, No. 39 Confidential. F. O. 64 Prussia 573). Karolyi was too tactful to express his own choice.

Benedek and Gablenz, was generally far in advance of Prussia's, even after the Danish war.

Europe's worst mistake was in her estimate of Prussia. She failed to appreciate the rapid transformation of the Prussian army. And while Bismarck was conceded to have talent and astounding self-assurance, he was ranked with Beust, not with Schwarzenberg.²⁸ His daring leaps of policy seemed to be the despairing efforts of a gambler; his task of raising the power of the Crown and of Prussia seemed a superhuman one. Europe daily looked for the news of his fall. Since Bismarck himself never felt entirely secure, this calculation is not to be wondered at. To these general European opinions the majority of Austrians in public and in high places subscribed. Biegeleben and Rechberg had as high opinions of Bismarck's ability as any; Franz Joseph always wished that he had his equal. But no Austrians appreciated Bismarck's national aims as well as Pfordten and certain political leaders in Baden did. Only a handful of military men had the acumen to recognize the superiority of the new Prussian army: the Frenchmen Bourbaki and Clermont-Tonnerre, the Bavarian von der Tann, those Austrians who advocated the introduction of the needle gun into the equipment of the Austrian army. In short, the calculations of Austrian diplomacy were in line with the current beliefs in European political circles. To ask that the *Ballplatz* possess as clear an insight as the few of unclouded vision is to ask that they produce a Kaunitz upon demand.

AUSTRIAN DIPLOMATIC TECHNIQUE

If the fundamental reason for Austria's defeat was the discrepancy between her ambitions and her resources, an important contributing cause was the conduct of her diplomacy. The Austrian army was victorious on one of the two fighting fronts, but the foreign office had little but losses to show on *both* its fields of battle.

²⁸ Count Münster, a penetrating observer, considered Bismarck's compromise at Gastein responsible for the underrating of Prussia, because "it engendered the belief that his policy was one rather of menace than of deeds." (*Political Sketches of the State of Europe* p. 91).

Many a friend of the *Ballplatz* was its worst critic. Almost unanimously the Austrian envoys abroad sighed for a more definite policy. They complained of being kept long in the dark; this gave them a feeling of insecurity which was bound to be reflected in their official language. General Gablenz in private indicted the entire system and method of the foreign ministry: "Prejudice, rusty ideas, failure to recognize the needs of the times, postpone everything, never take action, always just waiting,—it is this which is so disastrous for us."²⁹ His brother Anton, who had an unrivalled opportunity to compare the working of the *Ballplatz* with that of the *Wilhelmstrasse*, wrote in despair that "the perplexity and inactivity in Vienna is fearful, and for anyone who tries to get things done it is a desperate situation."³⁰

This uncertainty and ineptitude sprang from several causes. To some extent the *Ballplatz* was hampered by a lack of coordination in its relations with other departments. But the chief reasons are to be found in certain faults of technique, and in the conflicting personalities in charge of foreign affairs. In the last analysis, the *Ballplatz* did not know its own mind.

The actual machinery of the foreign office functioned as smoothly as was possible under these circumstances, for it was in the hands of officials accustomed to working together. Biegeleben, Meysenbug, Gagern, and Aldenburg, upon whose shoulders rested the bulk of the departmental routine, were experts of long experience, specialized knowledge, and fluent pens. Red tape was less existent in the *Ballplatz* than in any other department. Sir Robert Morier's indictment of the honesty of Austrian officials does not taint these counsellors of the foreign ministry.³¹ I know of no evidence that any

²⁹ Gablenz to Baron Esceles, letter of February 3, 1866 (HHS, *Nachlass Gablenz*).

³⁰ Anton von Gablenz to Ludwig von Gablenz, letter of May 10 (Appendix A, No. 18).

³¹ For the venality of Austrian officials, which contrasted with the honesty of the Prussian bureaucracy, see *Memoirs and Letters of Sir Robert Morier*

other government succeeded in securing "inside information" upon Austrian diplomatic secrets through the treachery of anyone connected with the *Ballplatz* during these years.

But the *Ballplatz* was hampered by the red tape in other departments, and the general lack of coordination between the various branches of the government. Much of this was inevitable in a great bureaucracy, but a comparison with Prussia shows that the fatty degeneration of the Austrian bureaucracy had proceeded farther. One Austrian critic called his land the China of Europe.³² Sir Robert Morier wittily compared Austria to a mollusc which possesses no single coordinated nervous system, but only a lot of unconnected and independent nerve-bunches distributed without any plan. "Not only are all the [Austrian] departments independent of each other, but in the departments themselves there is no cohesion and no unity. Personal jealousies and animosities divide the one department from the other."³³

This lack of coordination was particularly disastrous in the relations between diplomacy and the army. In Prussia, Diplomacy (Bismarck) definitely prevailed over the Army (Roon and Moltke), with the consent of the King. But Diplomacy first consulted the Army, ascertained its strength and possibilities, and built its plans four-square upon this solid foundation. In Austria the case was different. Both Diplomacy and the Army were independent "nerve-bunches," neither of which was given preference, and the Emperor himself did not succeed in bringing the two into harmony. Diplomacy did not ask the Army for a clear statement of possibilities. In March and April 1866 the Army twice interfered disastrously with Diplomacy, and Diplomacy spoiled the plans of the Army. Thanks to Austria's unwieldy military system, her

II, p. 4; Friedjung I, pp. 135-136; Frobel II, *passim*. The standard of Austrian honesty improved in later decades (cf. Jaszi: *The Dissolution of the Habsburg Monarchy* p. 166).

³² Baron Andrian, quoted by Jaszi pp. 72-73.

³³ Morier II, p. 4. Illustrations of red tape, pp. 72-73.

diplomacy was more at the mercy of her army in the final crisis than was the case in any other state.

But the interference of other departments cannot be blamed for certain cardinal faults of technique, which blighted the conduct of Austria's foreign relations, and for such blunders as the wording of the alliance protocol of January 1864 or the Karolyi interpellation of March 1866. The *Ballplatz* seldom had more than one string to its bow. It failed so often to support its main policy by coordinated action on all other fronts. It delivered itself lock, stock, and barrel at one time to Prussia, and later to France. To the customary lack of articulation, Mensdorff's peace offensive presented a noteworthy exception. The parallel Gablenz and Metternich negotiations in May 1866 were a feeble attempt to pull two strings at once, but just as their utility increased, the method was abandoned.

The tone of the official notes emanating from the foreign office often marred the effect that they were intended to produce. This was truer of Biegeleben's notes to the German courts and Prussia than to Aldenburg's more temperate correspondence with England, France, and Russia. Biegeleben had acquired the habit of dictating to Germany; in his eyes, Prussia was still only the largest of the *Mittelstaaten*, ally or no ally. After reading one of his compositions, Count Goltz remarked that such a tone was usually employed by great powers only in the moment before the declaration of war.³⁴ And both Mensdorff and the Emperor complained that Biegeleben's pen was too sharp.³⁵ Austria, anxious to persuade William to adopt her point of view, only angered him the more. In contrast, Bismarck's own notes were perfectly calculated to minister to his political purposes. He employed a tone of injured innocence, of dignified pleading, or of earnest complaint. He did not write with scorn, nor threaten until prepared to carry out his threats. Then, too late, Austria was

³⁴ Sybel IV, p. 30. But Sybel has often increased their curtness by his excisions and contractions.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

forced to modify her tone or to accept its logical results.

The *Ballplatz* did not vary its tune to the music; did not sufficiently regard and play upon each state as an individual instrument, differing from others; did not study the leading ministers and the sovereign, and adjust its words and actions to their peculiarities. The worst failures were the handling of Bavaria and Prussia; the chief successes, Würtemberg, Hanover, and Russia. No doubt such an adjustment devolved to a great degree upon the accredited envoy. But the selection of the most fitting person was obviously the task of the foreign minister.

No important changes of personnel were made by Mensdorff, but several might better have been made. It was a mistake to retain Blome in Munich after Pfordten became foreign minister. The anti-democratic, ultramontane, ironical young count consorted ill with the supersensitive professorial leader of the cause of the *Mittelstaaten*. Only a man of Karolyi's "sweet reasonableness" could compete on even terms with the suave Prince Reuss, Bismarck's envoy, and only a more appropriate and intelligent handling by Vienna could have eliminated the jars and jolts that made Austro-Bavarian relations finally a night-mare to both parties. Count Karolyi in Berlin was too prone to take Bismarck at his face value; he believed too long that the King would never draw the sword against Austria. Probably for these reasons, Bismarck had urged his retention in Berlin when his removal to Petersburg had been contemplated in Vienna. The Austrian chargé, Count Chotek, on the other hand, keenly penetrated Bismarck's relation to the King. A master of ready argument, he upheld the Austrian point of view more fluently than Karolyi. Nor was he intransigent, for it was he who first suggested to the *Ballplatz* the desirability of an administrative partition of the Duchies months before Blome presented the idea for Bismarck's acceptance at Gastein.⁸⁶ With

⁸⁶ Chotek made the suggestion in March 1865 on a visit to Vienna (Chotek to Mensdorff, letter of August 18, 1865).

a Chotek in Berlin and a Karolyi in Munich, Blome should have been brought to the *Ballplatz* as undersecretary or vice-minister, where his pro-Prussian attitude, his initiative, and resourcefulness would have stood Mensdorff in good stead. Several other young envoys or chargés, Brenner, Wimpffen, Kalnocky, Haymerle, deserved better positions. Most of the older envoys, dating from the Metternich period, gave valuable assistance to their chief through their trained services, their presence of mind in emergencies, and their acquaintance with the personalities and predilections of the courts which they graced by their missions. The Austrian diplomatic corps, if not brilliant, set a high standard of capacity.³⁷ It was not clogged with decayed nobles nor with worthless younger sons. Its average was at least as high as the average of the Prussian and Russian corps, probably higher than the French, and certainly higher than the British at the same time.

The *Ballplatz* may be fairly criticized on another score, its attitude toward public opinion and especially its handling of the press,—but this criticism applies equally to the entire Austrian government. Franz Joseph himself disdained public opinion, yet he was sensitive to it: he did not let it influence his foreign policy, yet he was vexed when it criticized and failed to appreciate his policy.³⁸ The methods of handling publicity varied of course with the personalities in the cabinet, and with the relative popularity of their policies. Between 1861 and 1863 Austria was guided by men who were adepts at publicity; Schmerling founded a paper and hired Fröbel's masterly pen to popularize Great-Germanism and liberal constitutionalism. But from 1864 on, Franz Joseph ran into difficulties with his abandonment of those ideals. With the coming of the reactionary Belcredi cabinet, matters went from bad to worse.³⁹ The convention of Gastein, the suspension

³⁷ Belcredi's ill-tempered strictures are quite unfair (*Die Kultur* 1906, p. 17).

³⁸ Cf. remarks in council of October 31, 1864 (Appendix A, No. 3).

³⁹ Regulation of press relations was discussed in the councils of November 2, 10, and 28 (protocols, HHS).

of the constitution, the inauguration of free trade were red rags to an enraged *bourgeoisie*. And to crown the irrationality, the relations with the press were put into the hands of the most retiring and reactionary of all the ministers, Count Esterhazy himself. The effectiveness of Bismarck's press-control was appreciated, but no similar scheme was devised. As a result, a portion of Austria's ample press-funds was squandered ineffectually.⁴⁰

In the government's favor be it said, however, that the press had greater freedom of expression in Austria than in Prussia in these years. There was no suggestion of gagging, but simply of directing the press into channels more favorable to governmental policies. It is in the constructive and instructive moulding of opinion that the cabinet displayed its helpless incapacity. Only when Franz Joseph was forced to give up his unpopular alliance and contemplate war with Prussia did the cabinet regain touch with the public. In reality, the Emperor went over to his public's viewpoint, but not because his public held it. In May and June, we have this singular paradox: Bismarck, master of publicity, broadcasting a popular shibboleth (a German parliament) failed to gain his public; Franz Joseph, novice in publicity, scorning the same popular ideal, gained the good will of his subjects and many outside his realm. But the bond was only one of bitter animosity against two rapacious neighbors. These emotions might unite all classes in a first vigorous fight, but they were not enough to carry the public through lost battles to give their life blood resolutely to the bitter end.

In resounding phrases, Kaiserfeld called upon the government for moral leadership: "He who attacks us with the power of ideas cannot be conquered unless we gain similar allies. . . . Show us the way to make the Empire truly great . . . ; give us proof that this way will be trod; concentrate all

⁴⁰ In 1866, the government spent 363,000 florins, of which 36,000 florins was a total loss (cf. J. Winckler: *Die periodische Presse Oesterreichs* [Vienna 1875] p. 131). For the Austrian press-bureau, see H. Wuttke: *Die deutschen Zeitschriften und die Entstehung der öffentlichen Meinung* p. 151 ff.

forces in that direction. . . . *In hoc signo vinces!*"⁴¹ After Sadowa, Biegeleben might condemn the Viennese as "cowardly Sybarites . . . a populace of fools, usurers, and gluttons."⁴² But they had asked for leadership and an ideal, and the government had failed them miserably.⁴³ It could not expect the self-sacrifice of the people upon the altars of dynastic rights and aristocratic privileges. Fearful of arousing too violent popular forces, which in case of defeat might react against the dynasty, no appreciable measures were taken to make public opinion a powerful constructive ally of the government in prosecuting the war to a successful conclusion.

The glaring contrast between the diplomacy of the *Ballplatz* and that of the *Wilhelmstrasse* was only too evident to contemporaries. Bismarck was admired even by his enemies, Austria was hardly respected even by her friends. This was due not only to Austria's weakness, and to the faults of omission and commission just reviewed. Behind it all was the conflict of a number of widely differing personalities and temperaments, whose influence in the shaping of Austrian foreign policy remains to be assessed.

THE AUTHORS OF AUSTRIAN POLICY

The responsibility for the exaggerated aims and the faulty technique of Austrian diplomacy rests of course upon the Emperor and his advisers. Was Franz Joseph's own role a primary or secondary one? Was he the leader or the led?

His constitutional freedom to choose and dismiss his ministers and their subordinates was unlimited. After 1860, to be sure, the necessity for conciliating the *Reichsrat* provided a certain limitation. With the fall of the Schmerling cabinet in 1865, however, this limitation collapsed. The cabinet which waged the war of 1866 was freely chosen by a sovereign who

⁴¹ Krones: *Moritz von Kaiserfeld* pp. 244-245; cf. p. 247.

⁴² Rüdiger von Biegeleben: *Ludwig Freiherr von Biegeleben* p. 351.

⁴³ In fairness to Mensdorff and Biegeleben, it must be recalled that both of these men wished to offer the public some sort of German parliament. The idea was killed by Belcredi, Esterhazy, and Franz Joseph.

wished to preserve the Prussian alliance, by and with the advice of two ministers who favored concessions to Prussia.⁴⁴ Franz Joseph could command any citizen to assume the post of minister or adviser even against that subject's inclinations and protests. The cases of Mensdorff, Gablenz, and Benedek come to mind at once.⁴⁵ No other person in Austria could force the Emperor against his will into a foreign policy he did not favor; yet *he* could force a foreign policy upon his ministers and advisers if he chose. His custom was to concert major policies with a few relatives and friends at court, and then to select the proper ministers to carry them out.⁴⁶ But in no case did Franz Joseph accept without reserve the guidance of a single minister, nor follow to its logical conclusion the program outlined by a single adviser. By that token he assumed upon his own shoulders not only the chief constitutional responsibility, but the primary moral responsibility as well.

* * * * *

The question of "guilt" for the war of 1866 has too often dominated historians' judgments upon the relative worth of Franz Joseph's associates. A fair appraisal of these ministers and advisers should not simply take into account their relative reluctance or eagerness to accept Bismarck's challenge. The historian should also assess the value of their constructive suggestions for harmonizing the differences between Austria and her enemies, or for placing the Fatherland in a stronger position to meet her enemies' attack.

Our study has shown that Austrian foreign policy between

⁴⁴ Attitude toward Prussia seems not to have been made a qualification for membership in the cabinet of 1865, though it was a factor in the selection of Mensdorff in 1864.

⁴⁵ For Mensdorff, see chapter iv above; for Gablenz: "Obzwar nicht eigentlich zum Zivil-Regieren erzogen, musste ich doch als Soldat folgen, und tun was mein Kaiser befahl, und deshalb nur deshalb bin ich hier . . ." (to Colonel von Witzleben, letter of September 27, 1865. HHS, *Nachlass Gablenz*); for Benedek: Friedjung: *Kampf* I, pp. 257-261.

⁴⁶ By some such procedure Mensdorff was chosen in 1864 and Belcredi in 1865.

1859 and 1866 was a vacillating compromise between Rechberg's conciliatory attitude toward Prussia and Biegeleben's less friendly policy, with Schmerling underlining the latter and Esterhazy continuing the former. The Austrian public thrilled at the *Fürstentag*; they detested the Prussian alliance. Hence for decades after the disaster of 1866, the public held Counts Rechberg and Esterhazy to be the chief villains of the piece: Rechberg had started the monarchy on the downward path; Esterhazy and the Jesuits had driven her over the precipice.

What is Rechberg's fair share of the responsibility? His opposition to a provocative treatment of Prussia had shown an appreciation for Austria's weakness. On the other hand, he had too hastily rejected Prussian overtures in 1860-1861. More than anyone else, Rechberg was responsible for drawing Franz Joseph into Bismarck's trap in January 1864. But he made plans to retrieve the error: a closer alliance with Prussia on the basis of mutual concessions, and the dismissal of Biegeleben and his consorts. Neither suggestion was accepted. The enraged public which accused him of pulling Prussia's chestnuts out of the fire was not only ignorant of this salvage program, but had inflated notions of Austria's strength. Like so many others, Rechberg suffered public dishonor for dynastic loyalty. His chief fault lay in his inability to impress his policy upon his monarch with consistency and force; he let himself be driven out of his track. But these limitations of character should not obscure his generally sound and careful diplomacy.⁴⁷

Rechberg's unfortunate successor was a general, not a diplomatist. He came to the ministry with a political philosophy like that of his predecessor, the main tenets of which were moderate conservatism, dynastic devotion, religious toleration, conciliation of and concession to Prussia. With no experience to guide him he felt like a fish out of water. The result was that, during the first year, he swayed between

⁴⁷ Cf. Friedjung's estimate, *Kampf* I, pp. 102-103; Engel-Janosi's estimate, *Graf Rechberg* pp. 132-133.

Esterhazy and Biegeleben. In the Gastein crisis he followed the latter: he wanted to "call Bismarck's bluff" by a strong policy; if this failed, he wanted to resign. He achieved neither object.

During the second year of his term, however, Mensdorff emerged as an individual with a policy of his own. His first year's experience, and the enhanced value of his military knowledge as war loomed, gave him more confidence. The "peace offensive," after the initial mistakes, was a well conceived plan, based on acute perception of Bismarck's diplomacy and an accurate sense of Austria's limited powers. Coupled with concessions which Mensdorff was willing to make, this policy, like Rechberg's, might have achieved a needed respite for the monarchy. But he, too, was unable to win the confidence of his colleagues or the Emperor for a whole-hearted trial of the policy. By remaining in office against his better judgment, his critics have harshly accused him of raising ministerial servility to a maxim of state. That judgment should be directed to higher quarters.

Count Mensdorff was an able soldier and administrator; with equal diplomatic training he might have made an able foreign minister. If he failed to see that Austria's Italian connection was an anachronism, and source of weakness, if he seconded Franz Joseph's emphasis on "honor" rather than expediency, he nevertheless realized that concessions to Prussian growth and to German liberalism were inescapable, that Austrian strength was unequal to Austrian pretensions, and that the future of the monarchy both before and after the war lay in cooperation with Prussia, not in revenge at the side of Napoleon. In his errors he was in good company; in his wisdom he was wiser than his monarch.

"For Mensdorff . . . Count Esterhazy was not a fortunate adjunct," wrote Belcredi reminiscently,⁴⁸ "for the mind of the latter is a predominantly critical one. In sharp criticism Moritz Esterhazy is a master, and he cannot deny himself

⁴⁸ Belcredi's "Fragmente," in *Die Kultur* 1906, pp. 12-13

the pleasure of critically illuminating every opinion, every proposal of another's. With every question of any importance, Mensdorff climbed from the first floor . . . to the second floor, where Esterhazy spent his time pondering. . . . If [the foreign minister] went upstairs plagued with doubts, he came down with a still heavier load of them; and so he went from the frying pan into the fire. Like all critics who fear nothing so much as to be criticized themselves, Count Esterhazy was very reluctant to utter a positive opinion even when he had one. And yet Mensdorff in the affairs of his department was thrown upon Esterhazy as an experienced diplomatist."

While condemning Esterhazy's failure to give positive advice, his colleagues and the public overrated the count's judgment.⁴⁹ His opinions on foreign affairs as expressed in the council show no unusual insight, and are frequently self-contradictory. In retrospect, his judgment appears no more "masterly" than that of Mensdorff or Rechberg whose diplomatic objectives Esterhazy shared. He could see the desirable goal, and he kept it consistently before himself, but he was inconsistent and erratic in his choice of means to attain it. His constant goal was the maintenance of the Prussian alliance as an instrument of eventual aid in defeating France and restoring the Metternich basis in Italy. He was patently and patiently pro-Prussian, yet he made the mistake of retaining Biegeleben in the *Ballplatz*. When Biegeleben steered the Austrian ship toward the storm, Esterhazy seized the wheel and lurched it back into the right course, only to leave it again in Biegeleben's hands. Esterhazy opposed the partition of the Duchies with Prussia, yet he was ready to sell

⁴⁹ In addition to Belcredi's opinion, just quoted, see Mensdorff's memorandum of October 26, 1866 (*Preussische Jahrbücher* CLXXX, 1920, Heft 3, p. 339). Bernhard von Meyer's eulogy of Esterhazy as hardly second to Metternich is an absurd exaggeration (II, p. 50). Lord Bloomfield thought him "a clever little Jesuit" (to Clarendon, letter of May 29, 1866. F. O. 356 Bloomfield Papers 39); the Vienna bourgeoisie called him "one of the cleverest politicians of his time" (*Neue Freie Presse* 1866, No. 787, leading article). Cf. Werther's opinion (Appendix A, No. 6).

them *in toto*.⁵⁰ He threw his influence toward compromise at Gastein but, of the two solutions proposed, he chose the one which satisfied Prussia the least. He opposed the war both before and after the fateful decision of April 21,⁵¹ yet he withheld an effective warning at the crucial moment.⁵² He thought that Austria could frighten William by "showing her teeth",⁵³ and he placed too much faith in Bismarck's alluring word-pictures of aid to Austria. His diplomacy, as far as we can identify it, was not the equal of Rechberg's, nor his attitude as enlightened as Mensdorff's.

Esterhazy's ultramontanism has been too harshly judged.⁵⁴ He clung too long to Venetia partly because it served as a bastion to protect the Holy Father, but also because it was the last rampart of the Metternich order and the first in its projected revival. The fight against the "Revolution" now appears to be the more dominant *motif* in his policy, and there is no reason to assign a religious motive to actions which can be traced equally well to political designs.⁵⁵

Esterhazy's power and influence over the Emperor has also been overrated.⁵⁶ It is a strange fact that the importance of

⁵⁰ It was an error of judgment to inform the Prussians of the divisions in the cabinet, and of policies which he could not persuade his sovereign to adopt, for such confidences weakened the hand of the *Ballplatz*.

⁵¹ Several remarks of his which seem warlike, are either susceptible of another interpretation, or were intended purely for public effect. His pacific attitude in May drew a rebuke from the Emperor and temporarily lost him Belcredi's friendship (council of May 1, 1866: Redlich: *Reichsproblem* II, p. 803; Meyer II, p. 51).

⁵² See the discussion in chapter x above.

⁵³ See his remarks in council of February 21, 1866 (Appendix A, No. 14).

⁵⁴ Friedjung II, p. 557.

⁵⁵ The chief sources for Esterhazy's ultramontanism are the public's unreliable impressions and Meyer's emotional deification. Certainly neither are conclusive.

⁵⁶ Friedjung seemingly accepted the public's opinion (I, p. 231) which was summed up in a penetrating article entitled "Graf Mensdorff und Graf Esterhazy" as follows: "Count Mensdorff was too weak to be an independent popular minister; Count Esterhazy was strong enough to be the opposite. Count Mensdorff wanted better things, although in his name worse things happened; Count Esterhazy could do what he wanted. . . . That was the difference." (*Neue Freie Presse* 1866, No. 787 *Morgenblatt*, leading article dated

this modest little man who disliked nothing more than the limelight, and who exerted his influence only in private conversations behind closed doors, was ferreted out by the journalists. They dubbed him the "minister-maker," and held him up to public execration as the principal cause of their woes.⁵⁷ He was certainly not the demon that they thought, but rather a "neurasthenic without clear judgment or firm will."⁵⁸ The count had more influence, to be sure, than any other cabinet minister between October 1864 and February 1866, but he exercised this influence intermittently. He did not possess the strength of character to take full responsibility for his policies nor to win his sovereign's full support. He was never the master. Franz Joseph's independence of judgment and action even in the face of his strongest advisers, including Schwarzenberg, is becoming clearer as more sources see the light. Esterhazy's authority and responsibility should therefore be less heavily assessed than it has been.⁵⁹

In two respects Esterhazy's political instinct was correct: he saw the necessity to compromise with Hungary before others did; and he realized that Austria could not stand a war for the hegemony of Germany.⁶⁰ Though he fathered policies close to Franz Joseph's own heart, the Emperor made him the scape-goat for the defeat of 1866. Mensdorff was dismissed with honor, Belcredi was retained in office, but Esterhazy was almost rudely cast off like a worn out garment, with the proverbial "thanks of the House of Habsburg." In this way the Emperor truckled to public opinion and relieved his exasperation. But for the disgraced minister, with the strain of the last six months weighing upon a frail physique, this treatment undoubtedly contributed to unhinge his none too

November 6. This article was used as a source by Wurzbach: *Biographisches Lexikon* XVII, pp. 361-363). Friedjung's judgment is tempered somewhat in II, p. 557.

⁵⁷ *Allgemeine Zeitung* 1865, No. 212, Vienna correspondence of July 29.

⁵⁸ Ernst von Plener: *Erinnerungen* I, p. 80.

⁵⁹ Redlich has already lightened the verdict (*Reichsproblem* II, p. 775).

⁶⁰ "Wenn man von allen Seiten gehetzt wird," he said, "wenn man zudem schwach ist, so muss man nachgiebig sein." (Meyer II, p. 51).

stable mind and to send him to an insane asylum for the remainder of a long life.

Unlike the others who influenced Austrian foreign policy during these crucial years, the *Staatsminister*, Count Belcredi, had had no previous diplomatic nor military experience. Appointed in the midst of the Gastein crisis, the complexity of his task of reconstruction prevented him from interfering in foreign affairs until the spring of 1866. He had long been suspicious of Bismarck, however. "We will try again to go along with Prussia," he said two months after Gastein, "If impossible, we shall make war, put an army corps in the Quadrilateral, and throw our weight against Prussia."⁶¹ Friendly to the Slavs, a strict Catholic, he had no love for Prussia. As minister of police, he prided himself on his secret information of Bismarck's plans against Austria; when his reports contradicted those received from the regular Austrian envoys, he doubted the correctness of the latter.⁶² Thus Belcredi came to form an opinion on foreign policy at variance with that of its official sponsors.

Count Belcredi was a man of action, not of compromise. So far as we know, he never joined with his colleagues in a willingness to offer concessions to Prussia.⁶³ Without such evidence, he stands convicted of misreading Austria's strength. His personal defense is weak, confused, and uncon-

⁶¹ Remarks to Conte Malaguzzi (*Risorgimento Italiano* XV, 1922, pp. 420-421). Cf. Belcredi's remarks to Schulte (Schulte: *Lebenserinnerungen* I, p. 112).

⁶² Belcredi's "Fragmente," in *Die Kultur* 1906, pp. 16-17.

⁶³ But did he wish to conciliate Italy, to accept the Malaguzzi offers? He toyed long with the Italian emissary, actually holding his last interview only two days before the Austrian mobilization in Venetia. Yet his motives are obscure. He never betrayed animus against Italy; his ancestry was Italian; but he was a political reactionary, and abhorred democracy. Probably he simply dangled Malaguzzi in order to keep Italy from joining Prussia. His memoirs provide no clue except a negative one: he would surely have mentioned the negotiations if he had supported them. (For Belcredi's interviews with Malaguzzi, see *Risorgimento Italiano* XV, 1922, pp. 417-421; XVI, 1923, pp. 238 ff.).

vincing.⁶⁴ On the other hand, he could not view the political and military situation with the eye of the expert; he had to trust the judgment of others, and he placed more confidence in the military men than in Esterhazy or Mensdorff. In the spring of 1866, he foresaw ruin to his financial measures, to his plans for Hungary, to the whole state, if the political uncertainty remained. His temperament chafed under inaction; he was ready to gamble. He became the strongest influence in the cabinet; he was backed by the military men; he secured the support of the finance minister and others; he was abetted by Biegeleben's group in the *Ballplatz*; he nourished Franz Joseph's suspicions of Prussia; he precipitated the mobilization against Italy; he scoffed at the "Metternich policy," broke with Esterhazy, and drove ceaselessly toward war.⁶⁵ Count Belcredi's responsibility as head of the ministry and deciding factor at the turning point is heavier than that of any of his ministerial colleagues.⁶⁶

The most intransigent of the remaining ministers was Franck, minister of war. It was of course his duty to propose measures of legitimate defense, but he went beyond this. "When one stands completely armed," he argued, "one can then use a tone which cannot fail to have effective results."⁶⁷ This was interference with diplomacy, and lays Franck open to graver criticism than that to which he has heretofore been

⁶⁴ Belcredi's "Fragmente," in *Die Kultur* 1906, pp. 5, 16-17, etc. Belcredi's later denial of all warlike remarks (cf. Adolph Franz: "Zur oesterreichischen Politik in der deutschen Frage von 1859 bis 1866," in *Historisch-Politische Blätter* CXIX, 1897, Heft 1, p. 876) is flatly contradicted by his words in the council of May 1, 1866 (Redlich II, p. 803).

⁶⁵ Mensdorff's memorandum of September 21, 1866 (*Preussische Jahrbücher* CLXXX, 1920, Heft 3, p. 337), confirmed by protocols of councils of April 21, 22, 23, 25 (Redlich II, pp. 795 ff.); Bernhard von Meyer II, p. 51, confirmed by Belcredi's words in council of May 1 (Redlich II, p. 803). Meyer is a first-rate source for this point, since he was recorder of the council.

⁶⁶ The judgment of Friedjung (I, p. 134) and Wertheimer (*Andrassy* I, p. 206) is unsuccessfully combated by Traub, in *Oesterreich, Zeitschrift für Geschichte* I, 1918, Heft 4, pp. 296-297.

⁶⁷ Remark in council of April 17 (protocol, HHS: this excerpt omitted by Redlich).

exposed.⁶⁸ On the other hand, Majlath, Larisch, and Wüllerstorf all contributed constructive suggestions for keeping the peace.⁶⁹ But once the die had been cast, they swam with the current. The finance minister visioned his deficits wiped out by war contributions levied on Prussian cities.⁷⁰

Never himself a cabinet minister, but wielding an influence at times as powerful as they, the *Referent* for German affairs in the *Ballplatz* was the most convincingly and consistently anti-Prussian of all.⁷¹ Ludwig von Biegeleben penetrated Bismarck's ultimate aims and understood the import of his diplomacy better than anyone else in Vienna. He wished to adopt Bismarck's own principle in dealing with the rival: *à corsaire, corsaire et demi*. His policy toward Prussia was a duplicate of Bismarck's attitude toward Austria: he would gladly live at peace with Prussia, if Prussia would accommodate herself to Austria's wishes; he doubted that Prussia would do so without a fight; he tried to obtain Prussia's co-operation by argument and persuasion, but he never counselled serious concessions to Prussia to avert a fratricidal contest.

The starting point in an appraisal of the *Referent's* diplomacy must be his advice to his sovereign when Austria stood at the cross-roads in 1864:⁷² Austria is in acute danger of isolation; palliatives are no longer in place; heroic measures must be adopted, and adopted at once. "Either the alliance with Prussia must be consolidated, or a *serious* understanding

⁶⁸ Friedjung I, p. 168. Redlich II, p. 775 is more correct.

⁶⁹ Majlath suggested simultaneous disarmament; Larisch suggested a personal appeal from Franz Joseph to William (remarks in council of April 17, omitted by Redlich). Wüllerstorf favored the sale of Venetia, and commercial relations with Italy (*Origines* VII, pp. 285-286; *Risorgimento Italiano* XV, 1922, p. 422).

⁷⁰ Bismarck to Goltz, June 2, 1866 (*G. W. V.*, p. 521), information undoubtedly from Mensdorff through Anton von Gablenz, with little or no exaggeration. No such remarks are recorded for Majlath and Wüllerstorf.

⁷¹ His son absolves him from "hatred" of Prussia, but not from determined hostility and suspicion.

⁷² Engel-Janosi: *Krise* pp. 187-192.

must take place between Austria and France." The former would be the more costly of the two because Bismarck would accept nothing less than Austria's exclusion from her German position. The King might retard this program, but could not prevent it in the end. "Austria is not yet prepared for . . . a great deciding struggle." The only alternative then is an alliance with France.

Since Franz Joseph rejected Biegeleben's French alliance, and adopted the alternative which Biegeleben discarded, no more definite repudiation of an adviser could have been given. Either Biegeleben should have resigned, or he should have accepted Franz Joseph's Prussian alliance. If he took the latter course, he should, according to his own logic, have advised the Emperor to "consolidate" it by adequate concessions, for the only remaining alternative was a "great deciding struggle for which Austria is not yet prepared."

But Biegeleben, logical as he was in many a pompous note defending the federal pact against Prussian infractions, yielded now to a fundamental emotion. He took the illogical policy of treating Prussia as if Prussia were isolated, and Austria had all the powers of Europe at her back. He knew that Austria was unprepared for a struggle, yet he headed Austria straight for such a struggle. The folly of this policy was even greater after Gastein. The hydra of a double war, only surmised before, rose like a specter. All knew that Prussia was perfecting her army and *materiel* at full speed, while Austria was cutting her army and military expenses to the bone. If in October 1864, Austria was not ready for a deciding struggle, she was patently even less so in 1866. If Biegeleben counted upon a reconciliation with Hungary, he reckoned wrongly: Hungary remained aloof. Yet the *Referent* still counselled no concessions; he resented the Gastein convention, and pulled Austria back from the embraces of Prussia to the protectorship of the Diet again. He worked constantly against the peace crusade of Mensdorff and Esterhazy, he sharpened his pen against Prussia, and pushed Franz Joseph toward war.

Had he changed his mind about the chances of victory since 1864? Or did he think to force the Emperor into the French alliance by picking up the gauntlet that Bismarck was always throwing down? No satisfactory answer has yet been given. His son defends his memory by stating that Biegeleben consulted the military experts and "constantly received reassuring replies."⁷³ Did his experts then change their prognostications from pessimism to optimism between 1864 and 1866? It is hardly credible. The clue is probably to be found in the character of this scintillating personality. One who had known him intimately for twenty years pointed out his central trait: Biegeleben possessed an all-consuming enthusiasm for an idea, without accurately estimating the dangers in it or the possibility of making it a practical reality.⁷⁴ With all the ardor of his passionate soul, Biegeleben clung to the ideal of Habsburg's leadership of all Germany. The thought of bestowing upon another sovereign the merest fraction of this majesty and this aura of centuries was almost physically painful to him.⁷⁵ Only a few weeks after he had sent his memorandum to the Emperor he hypnotized himself into the belief that "all factors which have enabled us for two generations to hold our position in Germany exist today as well."⁷⁶ Thus his grand vision caught him up and carried him away from earthly reality, upon which alone his edifice could securely be reared.

This grand vision of historic Habsburg supremacy coincided exactly with Franz Joseph's own ideal. By the magic of his style, the ardent *Referent* strove to keep Franz Joseph's eyes upon the mirage. All the pride of a mighty past was reflected in Biegeleben's stately compositions. When others sought to show the unreality of the vision, when the Emperor wavered and looked away, Biegeleben piped more vigorously the enchanting strains and regained his master's attention.

⁷³ Rüdiger von Biegeleben p. 300. He cites no names nor documents in proof.

⁷⁴ Rechberg to Franz Joseph, October 17, 1864 (Engel-Janosi: *Krise* p. 186).

⁷⁵ Cf. Rüdiger von Biegeleben p. 292.

⁷⁶ Letter to Blome, late in 1864 (Rüdiger von Biegeleben pp. 292-293).

More and more, these two, in pursuit of their vision, lost sight of the dangerous ground ahead of them, until, just as they thought their objective within their grasp, it vanished like Klingsor's garden at the stroke of Parsifal's spear, and they found themselves encompassed only by the dismal ruins of their empire.

While Biegeleben never attained the rank of minister, he often had the privilege of giving advice directly to the Emperor.⁷⁷ In view of his long service, his expert knowledge, his strong personality, and this special connection with the Emperor, Ludwig von Biegeleben may justly be called the most continuous and most powerful single influence in Vienna in promoting the conflict with Prussia. Without exaggeration, it can be said that the war of 1866, on the Austrian side, was Biegeleben's war.⁷⁸

The public did not know Biegeleben. He was a man of few words, of no desire for publicity. Justly an idol of the eminently cultured friends among whom he moved, the *Referent* was respected by those whose policy he opposed. He preferred the occupations of the study to those of the forum, a discussion of art or history to a speech in the *Reichsrat*. His soul was fired by the ancient glory of great conceptions like the Roman church, the Habsburg tradition, the German nation. To them he devoted every atom of his nervous energy, with the idealism and the passion of the artist that he was. To such a temperament the victory of Prussia in 1866 was unendurable, and after Sadowa he poured out his pent-up feelings

⁷⁷ *Ibid.* p. 324.

⁷⁸ Biegeleben's ideals were shared by his close friends, Baron Meysenbug and Max von Gagern. The influence of the latter declined after Mensdorff, at Rechberg's suggestion, removed him from the management of publicity. Meysenbug as undersecretary in the *Ballplatz* was only less influential than Biegeleben. While he drafted few documents of importance, and possessed a less dominating personality, he backed up his friend with all his influence. The three thus formed a bloc in the *Ballplatz*, of one heart and one mind, and after the war they shared a common obloquy. (They are mentioned, with varying criticism, by Friedjung, Arneth, Beust, Morier, Lorenz, Rogge, Rechberg, and Bismarck).

in an outburst of bitter poetry, which, better than any other evidence, documents his deepest motive forces:⁷⁹

Woe to thee, Berlin, and to thy lying tongues . . .
Must I the hand of the shameless robber grasp
To pay thee homage, O my Fatherland?⁸⁰

* * * * *

The leading personalities of the Austrian diplomatic corps also exerted an influence upon the direction and the fatal outcome of Austrian policy. The three most influential—Metternich, Blome, and Karolyi—gave conflicting advice, however. The first two urged Mensdorff to make concessions to Prussia's enemies;⁸¹ but when in 1866 they turned into

⁷⁹ Rüdiger von Biegeleben pp 348-351.

⁸⁰ 'Blind by your own will, unhappy Austria,

When will you learn to know your enemies? . .

When will you see as false the false one's oath,

False his kiss, false too his simulation? . . .

Woe to thee, Kaiserburg in Wien, betrayed

Nest of eternal indecision.

Destruction was for thee or thy betrayers,

Upon thy hesitation I gazed with tears

As thou gav'st up St. Marks without redress,

And Prussia's steeds the Danube waters drank. . . .

Who guarantees that dumbly this old earth

Will bear the shame, and God forget revenge? . . .

From victor's head will fall the ravished crown,

And Realm and People once again unite' (*Ibid.*)

⁸¹ Metternich's advice on the whole was salutary. He counselled either the French alliance or concessions to Prussia. He warned against "costly concentrations of troops" in 1866, for he thought it "madness" for Austria to go to war without France's partisanship for her (Metternich to Gablenz, letter of March 7, 1866; Cowley to Clarendon, April 12, No. 452 Most Confidential, F. O. 27 France 1615). But his constant efforts to induce the Emperor "to act like Bismarck" simply encouraged the *Ballplatz* to take hasty action, without convincing them of the need to pay off Italy and France beforehand (Metternich to Gablenz, letter of March 7, 1866).

Blome's advice in 1864-1865 was a singularly clear-sighted acceptance of the existing situation: "We can only fight Prussia if we go with France, and since we don't want to do that, our task is to keep Prussia from falling into the arms of France. . . . We should cease once for all to meddle and muddle in Germany where we neither wish to bite nor can." (Blome to Mensdorff, October 29, 1864). His personal contribution to this policy was the Gastein convention (cf. his report from Gastein, Appendix A, No. 9). All the more

fire-brands, Karolyi was changing into a strong supporter of Mensdorff's peace policy.⁸² The remaining envoys were divided in sympathy for or against Prussia. Some like Baron Werner counselled a return to the Metternich policy.⁸³ Others like Count Apponyi were decided opponents of the Prussian alliance.⁸⁴ Most of them deplored Austria's vacillation, which weakened her reputation in the eyes of Europe. Consequently, in the spring of 1866, many of these men tried to spur their chief to action.⁸⁵

The influence of individuals in the court and the Emperor's staff is more difficult to weigh because of our present paucity of information. The only strong ray of light comes from an important and fair-minded witness. Baron Werther, after the war, designated the first adjutant-general, Crenneville, as the person who, beyond all others, pressed for war against Prussia.⁸⁶ Meanwhile a cloud hangs over Franz Joseph's *entourage* unjustly obscuring the meritorious advice of some because

astonishing is his sudden metamorphosis into one of the chiefs of the "war party" in February 1866, which he justified on the ground of Bismarck's intransigence (letter to Mensdorff, May 20, 1866, Appendix A, No. 19). His heated letters and reports to Mensdorff from April to June called for war without delay (April 8 No. 32 *Vertraulich*, letters of April 14, 30, May 5, 8, 16, 20, 29, June 13, 16, reinforced by visits to Vienna in April and early June).

⁸² Karolyi favored friendly relations with Prussia, but since he did not think Bismarck would be able to bring William to war, he did not advise Mensdorff to make concessions. He carried out his instructions most tactfully, often softening Biegeleben's harsh tone. When he finally saw the seriousness of the danger from Prussia, he did yeoman service for Mensdorff in the cause of peace.

⁸³ Werner to Mensdorff, letter of January 28, 1865 (HHS, *Nachlass Reichenberg*).

⁸⁴ Fröbel II, p. 366.

⁸⁵ For example, Hübner wrote that "if we are attacked or our honor touched we will give back the blows with usury and make a relatively satisfactory peace" (to Mensdorff, letter of April 3, 1866); Prokesch warned against letting Prussia escape as easily as she did at Olmütz (to Mensdorff, letter of May 18, 1866).

⁸⁶ Werther to Bismarck, September 21, 1866 (Wertheimer: *Andrassy I*, p. 213). This charge was less true of the period before Gastein, during which Crenneville was in cordial correspondence with Manteuffel. Crenneville's position of course gave him immense influence.

of the unfortunate influence of a few. The heirs of Franz Joseph have set a courageous example in releasing some of his letters; and the Emperor's character does not suffer from exposure to the light. May the correspondence with his intimates speedily follow, from both ends of the exchange.

In the question of "war guilt" in Austria, the public must bear a large share of responsibility, not so much for its actual influence on government policy as for its desires and *intended* influence. Without much exaggeration, it may be said that, while the Prussian minister-president dragged an unwilling king and people into the war, the Austrian people were trying to drag an unwilling monarch and foreign minister into the struggle. The sources are unanimous in showing that press and public clamored for the punishment of the "bloated Berliners." The Prussian alliance was never popular, and already before the crisis of 1865 the call had been heard. Some wished to cover Austria's rear by recognizing Italy and pact-ing with Napoleon, but few were wise enough to see the need for the sale of Venetia. Though the government did nothing appreciable in either direction, the cry for action against Prussia did not subside. In the spring of 1866 it increased to a tremendous volume. Apart from a certain religious anti-pathy for Protestant Prussia, the public attitude was due to three other psychological reactions: the desire to humble an overbearing rival; the urge to show the world that its adverse opinion of Austria's strength was mistaken; and the sense of injury at Bismarck's taking Machiavellian advantage of Austria's plight. The ministry and the Emperor were not unconscious of this public feeling.⁸⁷ It was used as an additional argument by the "war party."⁸⁸ But it had probably no more effect on the decisions of the cabinet in 1866 than it had had

⁸⁷ Cf. Majlath's remark in council of February 21, 1866 (Appendix A, No. 14).

⁸⁸ Remark of Archduke Albrecht in military conference, April 8 (protocol in *Kriegsarchiv: Militärkanzlei*).

since 1863.⁸⁰ At any rate, the Austrian public had little right to complain of the outcome of a war for which it had clamored on the whole thoughtlessly and certainly obstreperously.

What leadership the government failed to provide was supplied to some extent by the Catholic clergy. They were second to none, if not in prematurely stirring up a war spirit, at least in preaching it vigorously against Protestant Prussia, and against the Italian despoilers of the Pope, once the war became inevitable.⁸⁰ However inappropriate for a religious organization to preach the shedding of blood, it was understandable as the action of a political organization whose principal protector was in danger of defeat.

Religious influences played an important part in determining the alignment of various groups of people in the German states.⁸¹ But the strongest influence was exerted upon the Roman believers in Prussia. To be sure, in Silesia where the majority were Catholics,⁸² the religious motive failed to prevent the province from giving the most loyal support to Bismarck's war. But in the Catholic Rhineland, where fear of French invasion was strong, the agitation of the bishops had important effects. Taxes were refused in some towns, and "hochs" for Kaiser Franz Joseph from Prussian throats were heard when the troops were called to the colors.⁸³ Bishop Ketteler and the Mainz clericals fought Prussia in their press and preached against war on Prussia's side.⁸⁴ They doubtless

⁸⁰ The nomination of Benedek to chief command in Bohemia was an exception to this statement.

⁸⁰ Cf. Wolfgruber: *Cardinal Rauscher* pp. 533-534.

⁸¹ The Protestants of Wurtemberg shied at taking sides with Catholic Austria (Handel to Mensdorff, May 2, No. 39A; letter of May 15). Blome's ultramontanism aroused antipathy in certain circles in Munich. The Catholic clergy in Baden worked ceaselessly to arouse feeling for Austria (Bluntschli: *Denkwürdigkeiten* [Nördlingen 1884] III, p. 134).

⁸² Friedjung (I, p. 302) cites the activity of priests in Silesia against the war.

⁸³ Fritz Vignier: *Ketteler, Ein deutsches Bischofsleben des 19. Jahrhunderts* p. 490.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.* pp. 489-490. They had also tried to get Prussia to aid Austria in 1859 (p. 349).

received words of encouragement from the Austrian clergy. At least it is known that they received "hints" from Biegeleben and Gager.⁹⁵ After the war, Franz Joseph thanked Ketteler for a "series of proofs of his most devoted feelings."⁹⁶

But the Catholics were not alone in raising the religious issue, nor the Austrian government in fostering it. Suffice it here to mention the single fact that two leading German papers, which in the spring were largely under the inspiration of Bismarck's government, and sometimes of Bismarck personally, tried to arouse the Protestants in Austria and Saxony against their Catholic sovereigns.⁹⁷ Certainly these religious differences gave an added intensity to the bitterness of the war-spirit, especially to the south of the Main; and they account for the origin of many a legend like that of the "Jesuit plot" of Esterhazy, Biegeleben, and Crenneville, who were thought to have pushed Franz Joseph into war behind the back of Mensdorff.⁹⁸

On the whole, one gains the impression that the great majority of Austrians anticipated victory, but that only a few were very sanguine, while a small minority were pessimistic. The more intelligent believed, with the *Ballplatz*, that the war on two fronts would tax the powers of the monarchy to the utmost.⁹⁹ Once the die had been cast, however, a pessimistic attitude only hampered efficiency, and a sane emphasis on victory and the fruits of victory was essential. With this fact in mind we should approach the post-April utterances of the statesmen in high position. No more conscientious officials existed in all Austria than most of these very ministers and advisers. Their loyalty to the dynasty and to the state is

⁹⁵ *Ibid.* p. 487.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.* p. 492.

⁹⁷ The *Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* and the *Kreuzzeitung*: citations in Bandmann p. 90.

⁹⁸ Fed by later "disclosures" in a Vienna paper, it was elaborated by the Protestant historians, Rogge, Lorenz, and Sybel.

⁹⁹ Cf. Mensdorff to Karolyi, March 1.

uncontested. It was that very loyalty that made them carry on a policy under impossible conditions imposed from above, and prevented them from seeking a fairer opinion before the bar of history.

FRANZ JOSEPH HIS OWN FOREIGN MINISTER

Franz Joseph was more truly the director of the foreign policy than of the internal policy of his state.¹⁰⁰ He was in constant touch with events and details, for he read all the more important correspondence. Count Mensdorff, publicly responsible for the conduct of foreign affairs, was not consulted on some of the most important decisions.¹⁰¹ Under these circumstances, the diplomacy of Austria was Franz Joseph's diplomacy, and the responsibility for it rests upon him to a greater degree than the responsibility for Prussian policy rested upon William I.¹⁰²

The most conspicuous characteristic of Austrian diplomacy was its instability, its seemingly planless vacillation. Franz Joseph allowed Austria to be used as the instrument of other states because he was unable to use others as instruments of his own policy. His wavering between Prussia and the *Mittelstaaten* was not due to lack of aim or method, however. He tried to bring Prussia and the German states into harmony within the federal pact, by opposing whichever seemed at the moment to be pursuing the more anti-German policy, and by backing up the more "loyal" party. The mistake of Franz Joseph was his failure to recognize the proper conditions under which a policy of balance could be successfully pursued. Bismarck did not balance between France and Russia,—he clove to Russia. With Russia at his back as a friend, Bismarck balanced between Austria and France, and did so with

¹⁰⁰ Redlich: *Francis Joseph* p. 168.

¹⁰¹ Mensdorff's memorandum of October 26, 1866 (*Preussische Jahrbücher* CLXXX, 1920, Heft 3, p. 342). A witty diplomat remarked that Mensdorff was not minister for external affairs, but only "externally minister."

¹⁰² The evidence for Franz Joseph's direction of foreign affairs is too bulky to cite here. Cf. Brandenburg: *Untersuchungen* p. 410.

consummate dexterity. Without the backing of any other great power, Franz Joseph balanced between the weak and disunited German states and Prussia—two most unequal forces—and well-nigh lost the friendship of both.

This tendency was aggravated by the Emperor's peculiar relation to his ministers. He appointed men of contrasting views, like Schmerling and Rechberg, to the same cabinet; he installed Esterhazy and Mensdorff in the *Ballplatz*, and yet retained Biegeleben and Meysenbug. One cannot speak of "governing" in Austria, said Lord Palmerston ironically, for the Emperor does nothing but mediate between his own ministers.¹⁰³ Franz Joseph rarely gave a minister his full confidence, nor let him carry out a policy to its logical conclusion. He adopted from each what he chose to adopt, and discarded the rest, however essential it might be to the policy advocated by the minister concerned. He accepted cautious negative advice more readily than bolder expedients. But in this case two negative policies brought together did not make one positive policy. Moderation, caution, were deeply ingrained in his nature. "All that the Emperor lacks is a certain amount of self-confidence," said Metternich euphemistically.¹⁰⁴ Biegeleben more frankly called it "irresolution," and bitterly termed the Hofburg a "nest of eternal indecision."¹⁰⁵

Upon these personal qualities of the sovereign depended the system. This system might prove an excellent one for a strong ruler with the statesman's foresight and intuition. It might be a harmless system even for the ruler of a strong and geographically isolated state, like England in Elizabeth's later years, or Russia under Alexander II. But it was a disastrous policy for a sovereign of average ability, who ruled over the most complex and unfortunately situated state in Europe. Austria could not retire from the European stage to recuperate

¹⁰³ Vitzthum von Eckstädt p. 78.

¹⁰⁴ Schussler; *Dalwicks Tagebücher* p. 145.

¹⁰⁵ "Herrschenden Unentschlossenheit" (letter to Apponyi, early in 1865; Rüdiger von Biegeleben p. 293); "Nest ewig unentschiedener Gedanken" (*Ibid.* p. 350).

her forces and choose the day and the hour when she would emerge again. As her resources were weakened, she had to rely the more upon diplomacy. Austria's diplomacy therefore should have been granted the utmost possible freedom of movement. It should have been able to canvass the whole of Europe for alliances, and to pay well for those which promised the greatest security. Franz Joseph, like Bismarck, should have been a revolutionist with Napoleon or a conservative with the Tsar. He should have followed either Biegeleben or Rechberg to the limit of his power. Yet he forced his foreign minister to work within narrower limits than any other in Europe.

Within those limits, to a certain extent, Franz Joseph was an opportunist in method. He occasionally relaxed his scruples for some immediate gain.¹⁰⁶ He abetted the democratic Augustenburg and thereby the principle of self-determination in the Duchies; he reluctantly entered into correspondence with the Bonapartes; he finally broke through the sacred prescriptions of the federal constitution in order to unite the German states in action against Prussia. But in the broad lines of his policy, an absolutely vital opportunism was prevented by Franz Joseph's inflexibility and dogmatic principles.¹⁰⁷

The aims of Austrian policy were determined in their entirety by the Emperor. To his "strong monarchical sense, Germany presented itself as a collection of princes among whom he enjoyed a dominating position as head of the Arch-

¹⁰⁶ Only in a limited sense can it be said that "the immediate and tangible determined him" (Redlich: *Francis Joseph* p. 178; cf. Srbik, in *Historische Zeitschrift* CXLIV, 1931, Heft 3, p. 513).

¹⁰⁷ It has been said that Franz Joseph "was as little misled by principles as by prejudices" (Friedjung. *Historische Aufsätze* p. 523, cited and criticized by Oswald Redlich in the *Neue Oesterreichische Biographie* I, p. 17), and that "he had a great capacity for looking life's realities in the face and sacrificing old ideals without complaint." (Srbik, *loc. cit.* p. 514). While both these statements are true for Franz Joseph's later life, and perhaps for his character in general, they obviously are not applicable to his foreign policy before 1871, except to the most limited extent.

House.”¹⁰⁸ Prussia to him was not a great power but only the largest of these secondary states.¹⁰⁹ The Emperor’s steadfast purpose was peace through the harmonious alliance of all these German princes under his leadership. This alliance of central Europe would for the moment constitute merely a defensive rampart to check the further advance of the “Revolution” from the west.¹¹⁰ But eventually, when Austria had recovered her strength, and when Louis Napoleon should be claimed by death, the Emperor’s advisers expected,—and probably Franz Joseph also expected,—a great counter-revolutionary offensive to regain Austria’s former hold upon Italy, to weaken and set permanent bounds to liberal nationalism.¹¹¹ The primary motive underlying these ideas was the dynastic, i. e. the protection of his inherited Habsburg territories, peoples, and privileges. Moreover, it was his traditional duty to protect the monarchical rights and privileges of the other German sovereigns. The more he convinced them that their cause was identical with his own, the more he strengthened his own position. In this way, duties coincided with the protection of rights, and came to be identified with rights in Franz Joseph’s mind.

It is true that from 1859 the Kaiser became an opportunist in constitutional policy within his dominions. He scrapped his ideal of centralized absolutism and tried four other forms of government within seven years. But he saw this as a means to a single unchanging end: to strengthen Austria internally so as to be able to preserve Austria’s predominance in Germany and to regain Austria’s predominance in Italy. This purpose was held with the tenacity of a dogma; the ideology behind it was not a rationally developed system of

¹⁰⁸ Joseph Redlich: *Francis Joseph* pp. 112-113.

¹⁰⁹ As evidence of this, his representative in Berlin was only an envoy, not an ambassador.

¹¹⁰ Remarks of Franz Joseph in council of October 31, 1864 (Appendix A, No. 3).

¹¹¹ This expectation of Rechberg, Esterhazy, and Mensdorff was constantly nourished by Bismarck, but I know of no expression of it from Franz Joseph.

political philosophy, but more akin to an ingrained and inherited set of simple religious beliefs, not incorrectly designated by Metternich as "*Gefühlspolitik*." The sequel showed that Franz Joseph had held a far too sanguine estimate of the willingness of the other German princes to support his aims, and of the strength of Austria's physical resources, her army, and the readiness of his peoples to sacrifice themselves for his ideals.

The Emperor's personal policies and predilections also narrowly limited his choice of ministers. But was it his fault that he found no second Schwarzenberg?¹¹² He disliked conspicuous ministers, but both Schwarzenberg and Bismarck were masters at preserving the proper deference, keeping themselves at the side of the throne, not in front of it. Franz Joseph long remained under the spell of Schwarzenberg's personality; and he often wished that Bismarck's services were available to him. After all, Bismarck had had to be forced upon William himself as a last extremity. A Bismarck in Vienna must have counselled sacrifices and concessions of principle unpalatable to Franz Joseph. Yet such a task could hardly have been more difficult than Bismarck's actual task in Berlin. The Kaiser's general make-up, his consciousness of monarchical authority, his sense of duty, his intellectual and moral outlook differed little from those of King William. In fact, the rulers of Austria, Prussia, England, and Russia at this time were more truly of one type than the Enlightened Despots of the preceding century.¹¹³ They all possessed a native common sense which recognized genius when it was thrust upon them in gentleman's clothes. Men of outstanding ability were lacking in the Austrian diplomatic corps at this time. Franz Joseph found no Bismarck because a second Bismarck was not to be found. It was the Emperor's lot to face the first Bismarck alone.

¹¹² Redlich: *Francis Joseph* p. 320 affirms it.

¹¹³ All four had German mothers.

FRANZ JOSEPH AND BISMARCK

How unequal the two protagonists, the man of duty pitted against the creative artist, a normal man against a genius. Yet not so dissimilar in aims. Each believed religiously in monarchy by God's grace; each wanted to found a stronger Germany in which his state would be undeniable leader, with the subordinate cooperation of the other. The disparity in their capacities begins to appear in the striking difference between their methods. Franz Joseph believed in preserving a higher standard of conduct among the conservative monarchies than the "revolutionary" states observed. Treaties should be kept, not broken. He sought to exercise the principles of truth and honor in dealing with monarchs of similar political ideals, and with England. Napoleon and Victor Emanuel had different "principles," hence they were untrustworthy, unscrupulous. To a certain extent Franz Joseph thus wished to retain the standards of private life in statecraft. He was a cavalier.¹¹⁴

No such scruples hampered Bismarck. A month after Königgrätz he wrote to his son: "... in politics, when one has many enemies, one must first put the strongest out of the running and then bleed the weaker ones, which would be a very unchivalrous and low trick in private life."¹¹⁵ Machiavellian reason of state motivated his acts; and he was able to harmonize this public policy with a deep religious faith and a spotless private life. His political morality might have been no higher than the cynical standard of the eighteenth century were it not for the necessity of conforming to the higher standards of his own monarch and of public opinion. But Bismarck knew how to make reason of state coincide with, or take the same course as the *Zeitgeist* of nationalism and

¹¹⁴ This figure has been often used, more recently by Srbik and Bibl

¹¹⁵ "Was im Privatleben eine sehr unritterliche Gemeinheit wäre." (Letter of August 1, 1866 from Nikolsburg: *Bismarcks Briefe an seinen Sohn Wilhelm* [ed Windelband] pp. 14-15).

parliamentarism. And the *Zeitgeist* favored Prussia, not Austria.¹¹⁶

During the period of the struggles, roughly from 1851 to 1871, Bismarck and Franz Joseph, in their feelings toward each other, reflected the attitude of North Germany toward South Germany and south toward north. Bismarck liked Franz Joseph, but did not admire him; Franz Joseph admired Bismarck, but did not like him. The Kaiser had a "disquieting" admiration for Bismarck's firmness and sure touch,¹¹⁷ which he had found in no minister since Schwarzenberg; he disliked his "exaggerated" statements,¹¹⁸ his German policy, his coquetting with France. The period of the Danish war witnessed the height of Franz Joseph's admiration, and it lasted through the Schönbrunn conference.

In November 1864 began a change toward growing suspicion. The next eighteen months provided a series of rude shocks, during which the Emperor's esteem was gradually overcome by an increasing dislike for a man who more and more adopted the "unscrupulous" methods of a Cavour, and who consorted with "conspirators" like the monarchs of France and Italy. Franz Joseph saw that he would have to fight with similar weapons. For the first time, he allowed Mensdorff to try to secure Bismarck's fall. "So long as Bismarck remains, there will be no rest."¹¹⁹ But Bismarck's renewal of the old refrain, the crusade against France, revived on the very eve of war a spark of the old admiration in an Emperor who was weary of the helplessness of his own ministers. He said with a sigh to Gablenz, that perhaps any other Prussian minister would be even worse for Austria than Bismarck was; and Count Bismarck possessed many traits that he "regarded highly," but "one must never trust him,

¹¹⁶ Whether Bismarck was so successful in the 1880's is another question.

¹¹⁷ Vogt: *Die hessische Politik* p. 44.

¹¹⁸ Letter to Albert of Saxony, February 16, 1864 (Otto Ernst: *Kaiser Franz Joseph I. in seinen Briefen* p. 160).

¹¹⁹ *Briefe Kaiser Franz Josephs I. an seine Mutter* p. 351.

and in this country one cannot forgive him for setting Italy upon us."¹²⁰

Utilizing the existing situation with masterly virtuosity, Bismarck had placed before Franz Joseph the alternative of abdicating his position in Germany or fighting to maintain it. Try as he would, Franz Joseph could see no escape from the iron ring closing round him. With his ministers he decided on April 25 that it was "urgently necessary to end the present tense and increasingly unendurable situation by a decisive diplomatic action which might draw war behind it."¹²¹ "Only a fundamental and durable understanding with Prussia," he wrote a week later to his mother, "could be of advantage in our situation, and such an understanding seems to me absolutely impossible without abdicating our position as a Great Power. One must face the war with composure and trust in God, for since we have gone so far, the monarchy could better endure a war than a slow disintegrating and dishonorable peace."¹²² Biegeleben expressed his master's emotions more directly: "Austria is not a Power to be deprived of honor, influence, and prestige, nor to be pushed from well-earned positions without drawing the sword."¹²³ The Emperor silenced the doubts and hesitations of Esterhazy and Mensdorff with a cool thrust: "Retrospective views are no longer in place; one must look at things exactly as they stand . . . [they] develop independently of all human calculation, and all efforts to avert them prove vain."¹²⁴ "When all the world is against you and you have no friends at all," he reasoned after the war, "there is not much prospect of success, but a man must defend himself as long as possible, do his duty to the last, and finally fall with honor."¹²⁵ So might have spoken the tragic hero of some great epic, caught in the toils of a relentless Fate.

¹²⁰ Anton von Gablenz to King William, May 25, 1866 (HAA).

¹²¹ Redlich: *Reichsproblem* II, p. 802.

¹²² Letter of May 3 (*Briefe an seine Mutter* p. 352).

¹²³ Mensdorff to Karolyi, March 1, 1866.

¹²⁴ Council of May 1, 1866 (Redlich II, p. 803).

¹²⁵ Letter of August 22, 1866 (*Briefe an seine Mutter* p. 358).

Though not of an introspective nature, Franz Joseph could hardly fail to accept some of the responsibility. "We were very honorable but very stupid," he confessed laconically.¹²⁰ He really suffered more than his letters show, and had what amounted to a serious spiritual breakdown. He felt that everything he tried to do turned out badly, that he had an "unlucky hand." But still he put up a courageous façade, admitting few to the consciousness of the depths which his spirit had touched. "I have a bitterly hard crust to eat, and only my trust in God and an honest will to do my best can give me the strength to keep afloat."¹²⁷

Mingled with his self-disillusionment was the belief that he had been caught by a conspiracy hatched by Bismarck, Napoleon, and Italy.¹²⁸ In a world of trickery and deceit, his attempt to act upon moral principles had only brought him ruin. Is it any wonder that in the hour of disillusionment his thoughts turned toward the unchivalrous motive of revenge? Naturally, too, his bitterness was directed, not against the Frenchman whose hostility he had always taken for granted, but against the false friend in Germany whose "principles" he had always been told were true-blue. Bismarck to him was a conspirator of a deeper dye than Napoleon, a robber the more execrable because a hypocrite and traitor to the cause he had professed. "It is a war of life and death which will not be ended for a long long time," wrote the embittered monarch.¹²⁹ He dismissed the ministers who had counselled conciliation and friendship with Prussia, and called to the *Ballplatz* Bismarck's worst enemy in Germany.

But the Kaiser's calculations still failed to prevail over the political forces of Europe; events after 1866 still played into the hands of the demonic minister in Berlin, who utilized them

¹²⁰ Letter of August 22 (*Ibid.* p. 358).

¹²⁷ Letter of November 20, 1867 (*Ibid.* p. 364).

¹²⁸ In May he wrote "... it is becoming clearer every day that each step in Berlin and Italy is ... the link in a chain of measures which have long been agreed upon." (Letter of May 3, 1866: *Ibid.* p. 352); "Before the war, we were already betrayed and sold." (Letter of August 22, 1866: *Ibid.* p. 358).

¹²⁹ Letter of August 22, 1866 (*Ibid.* p. 358).

to further Prusso-German unification. Made cautious by past experience, Franz Joseph and Beust had not secured their objectives before the fateful war of 1870 caught them unprepared. Franz Joseph watched the progress of hostilities, hopeful "that France can hold out longer than Prussia."¹³⁰ But King William "with his arrogance, his vanity and sanctimoniousness" had "shameless good luck."¹³¹ The catastrophes which overtook the French did not appear encouraging for the plans of Franz Joseph.¹³² "The future looks dark and may well be sadder than the present for us."¹³³

The founding of the German Empire and the peace of Frankfurt buried Franz Joseph's hopes beyond disinterment. It had been his misfortune not only to be set to solve one of the most complicated problems facing any European monarch, but at the same time to be forced to match his wits against the greatest German statesman of the century. Bismarck's true genius had at last been proved beyond doubt. Franz Joseph's underlying instinct for the immediate practical reality broke through the mist of his pique, his pride, and his memories of former grandeur. He became an opportunist in foreign policy as well as internal. He had already been willing to pact with revolutionary anti-papal Italy. He now accepted the hand of friendship tendered by Bismarck, a friendship which became more cordial as the years went on. He entered the League of the Three Emperors, the Dual and the Triple Alliances. He finally and definitively accepted the advice which had angered him when Bismarck had offered it a decade before: he shifted to Hungary the center of gravity of the empire, turned his back upon Germany, and faced the Balkans. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, with Bismarck's benediction, he sought the long-lost compensation for Venetia. In the hegemony of the Balkans, he sought reward for the loss of the hegemony of Germany. In the Dual Alliance he found that close association

¹³⁰ Letter of August 3, 1870 (*Ibid.* p. 374).

¹³¹ Letter of August 25, 1870 (*Ibid.* p. 378).

¹³² *Ibid.* pp. 377, 380-381.

¹³³ Letter of October 23, 1870 (*Ibid.* pp. 380-381).

with a conservative German brother-monarch, and in another sense that union of central Europe, for which he had longed in the years before 1866.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

No. 1

RECHBERG TO METTERNICH, Vienna, March 21, 1863

Instructions. Draft ¹

[*Haus-, Hof-, und Staatsarchiv*, Vienna: P A. IX. 76 *Varia*] ²

Instructions secrètes et personnelles pour le Prince Metternich

Le Mémorandum ci-joint en double exemplaire, dont un est destiné à être communiqué à l'Empereur Napoléon, contient les seules assurances positives que l'Autriche, si elle veut être sincère et loyale, est en mesure de donner aujourd'hui à la France.

En effet du moment où il est posé en principe que l'Autriche a besoin de repos, qu'elle ne peut s'engager maintenant à une politique active et que les circonstances seules peuvent la forcer à changer d'attitude, il est évident qu'il faut attendre que ces circonstances se soient présentées pour préciser le genre et le degré d'influence qu'elles exerceront sur la politique de l'Autriche. Il est admis que tels évènements peuvent survenir qui rapprocheront l'Autriche des vues de l'Empereur Napoléon, mais la nature de ces évènements, les lieux où ils se produiront, la manière dont ils mettront en jeu les intérêts de l'Autriche sont autant de faits qui devront être pris en considération avant d'indiquer avec quelque certitude les conditions qui pourraient compenser aux yeux du Gouvernement Impérial les charges onéreuses de l'alliance proposée.

Aborder dès aujourd'hui l'examen de ces conditions serait se lancer dans le domaine des conjectures. Des déductions basées sur de simples suppositions et exposées ainsi à toutes les profondes modifications que la réalité peut leur faire subir n'ont qu'une bien faible valeur. On peut cependant dans des entretiens très confidentiels examiner des hypothèses pourvu qu'elles soient présentées et reçues comme telles et que ce caractère leur soit soigneusement conservé

Sous ces réserves, il serait possible de dépasser les limites du Mémorandum et d'envisager quelques unes des éventualités dont dépendrait une entente telle que la désire l'Empereur Napoléon.

Les conditions sous lesquelles une alliance sincère et durable entre l'Autriche et la France peut être obtenue rencontrent des obstacles dont

¹ In the handwriting of Baron Roger Aldenburg, counsellor for the affairs of France, England, and Italy, in the Austrian ministry of foreign affairs. There is some doubt as to whether these instructions were actually given to Metternich, but they are nevertheless a valuable index of the attitude of Rechberg and his advisors.

² Unpublished. Briefly summarized in Friedrich Engel-Janosi: *Graf Rechberg* p. 97. See also chapters i and xi above.

l'Empereur Napoléon devra tenir compte s'il veut bien examiner la position de l'Autriche avec justice et impartialité. La loyauté et la sincérité dont on veut faire preuve de part et d'autre exigent que l'Autriche expose franchement ses objections.

L'éventualité de la cession de la Vénétie, d'une province pour la prospérité et la défense de laquelle des millions ont été dépensés et des milliers de soldats ont été sacrifiés, d'une province dont le quadrilatère garantit si bien la possession et dont la position géographique assure à l'Autriche le libre accès de la seule mer qui lui soit ouverte et procure à toute l'Allemagne du Sud son principal débouché commercial,—l'éventualité d'une pareille cession ne pourra jamais être présentée comme avantageuse ou même admissible à l'Empereur et à l'opinion du pays sans que les conditions de l'équilibre européen actuel soient totalement changées et que l'Autriche ait acquis en conséquence aussi bien en Orient qu'en Allemagne des possessions nouvelles et des avantages assez réels pour la dédommager entièrement.

Encore ne faut-il pas perdre de vue que pour obtenir ces compensations l'Autriche devrait se lancer dans une politique d'aventure, renier les traditions de sa politique conservatrice, se mettre peut-être même à la tête de la révolution—renverser des trônes, obérer ses finances et risquer en combattant pour le principe des nationalités au dehors de réveiller des tendances dangereuses chez les nationalités à l'intérieur, sur lesquelles reposent une partie de sa richesse et de sa puissance.

Les compensations que l'Autriche trouverait en Allemagne auraient pour résultat de grands avantages peut-être; mais en même temps de graves responsabilités lui incomberaient à la suite de l'action décisive de son influence sur l'esprit national. Si la France tournait ses yeux vers le Rhin comment l'Autriche pourrait-elle renier alors le prétexte qui lui aurait assuré l'influence exclusive en Allemagne et mentir au principe des nationalités au point de consentir à *l'annexion à la France de provinces allemandes*?

Il ressort de ce qui précède que si la perspective d'une cession volontaire de la Vénétie n'est pas repoussée de prime abord comme une impossibilité absolue, elle rencontre du moins des obstacles si graves qu'elle se trouve en tous cas reléguée dans un avenir bien lointain. En effet, pour pouvoir jamais se concilier avec les intérêts de l'Autriche, cette cession doit être subordonnée à l'accomplissement d'événements qui donneraient à l'Autriche des avantages fort difficiles à réaliser et qui l'empêcheraient en même temps d'abandonner à la France l'objet que celle-ci désire peut-être le plus vivement. En un mot l'agrandissement de l'Autriche en Allemagne qui serait toujours une condition sine qua non d'une cession volontaire de la Vénétie exigerait d'un côté l'anéantissement de la Prusse et de l'autre côté impliquerait pour l'Autriche l'obligation de se faire le défenseur de la nationalité allemande et de ne pas souffrir qu'un territoire allemand passât sous la domination de l'étranger.

Ceci posé, l'Autriche n'en admet pas moins que si un remaniement considérable de la carte lui assure un agrandissement territorial et une

extension d'influence en Allemagne et en Orient, la France aurait droit de son côté à rechercher des avantages équivalens partout où elle peut les trouver en dehors de l'Allemagne. Quant à l'éventualité de la reconstitution d'un Royaume de Pologne, il est évident que toute combinaison de ce genre entraîne pour l'Autriche dans un avenir plus ou moins rapproché la perte de la Galicie. On ne peut donc s'attendre à ce que l'Autriche contribue à favoriser un pareil plan et s'engage ainsi dans une guerre certaine soit contre la Russie seule, soit contre la Russie et la Prusse dans le but de perdre une de ses plus belles provinces. L'Autriche ne pourrait adhérer à la reconstruction d'une Pologne indépendante et au sacrifice que ce fait lui imposerait que moyennant une compensation équivalente à la perte. Si c'est un marché qu'on propose, encore faut-il que les deux parties contractantes soient dans les mêmes conditions et que l'une puisse livrer d'un trait de plume ce que l'autre peut céder d'un trait de plume. Or, il n'en est point encore ainsi et la France ne dispose en maîtresse ni en Allemagne, ni en Orient de provinces qui puissent aujourd'hui servir de matière à un échange acceptable pour l'Autriche. Il n'est donc aucunement dans l'intérêt de l'Autriche de mettre aujourd'hui sur le tapis la question de la reconstitution de la Pologne. Cela peut-être regardé au plus comme une question ouverte pouvant recevoir sa solution à la suite d'une guerre heureuse contre la Prusse et la Russie qui mettrait à la disposition des Puissances victorieuses des objets d'échange soit en Allemagne, soit en Orient.

Si la France veut procurer à l'Autriche en Orient des acquisitions qui lui permettent de concourir ailleurs aux vues de l'Empereur Napoléon, il serait nécessaire avant tout de ne point favoriser les velléités d'indépendance politique que manifestent les pays soumis à la Souveraineté ou à la suzeraineté de la Porte. Ces pays seraient peut-être disposés à préférer la domination de l'Autriche à celle de la Porte, mais si on les amène peu à peu à conquérir une indépendance complète, il devient très douteux qu'ils consentent à y renoncer en faveur de l'Autriche. Favoriser le bien-être matériel des populations, protéger les chrétiens là où ils sont complètement dépendans des Musulmans est une politique parfaitement louable et utile à laquelle l'Autriche sera toujours prête à s'associer. Mais aider les Princes de Serbie et de Moldo-Valachie à s'affranchir entièrement d'une autorité qui n'est plus que nominale et dont le joug ne pèse plus du tout sur les populations chrétiennes c'est aller directement à l'encontre du but qu'on se propose si on veut rendre possible l'influence ou la domination de l'Autriche sur ces contrées.

No. 2

AUSTRIAN COUNCIL OF MINISTERS, Vienna, May 25, 1864

Protocol^a

[Haus-, Hof-, und Staatsarchiv, Vienna: Kabinettskanzlei, K.Z. 1669, M.R.Z. 1278]

^a Unpublished.

[Vorsitzender: Seine K.K. Hoheit der Durchlauchtigste
Herr Erzherzog Rainer,
Gegenwärtige: Der Minister des Äussern Graf Rechberg,
Der Minister der Polizei Baron Mecséry,
Der Staatsminister Ritter von Schmerling,
Der Finanzminister Edler von Plener,
Der Minister Graf Esterhazy.]

Nachdem der *Minister des Äussern* einen kurzen Rückblick auf die Haltung Österreichs in der schleswig-holsteinischen Angelegenheit geworfen hatte, referirte Er über den dermal plötzlich bei den Theilnehmern der Londoner Konferenz eingetretenen Meinungsumschwung.⁴ Während die Westmächte früher die Integrität des dänischen Staates um jeden Preis vertheidigen zu wollen schienen, lässt man jetzt die Integrität gänzlich fallen! Selbst Dänemark zeigt sich geneigt lieber einen Theil seines Territoriums völlig abzutreten, als sich mit einer blossen Personalunion der Herzogthümer zu begnügen. Obgleich Österreich bis jetzt die Treue den Verträgen und somit auch dem Londoner Vertrage, hochgehalten hat, wäre es doch gänzlich unzeitig, jetzt noch diesen Vertrag *gegen* den Willen der übrigen Paciszenten und insbesondere des Hauptinteressenten — Dänemarks — durchführen zu wollen. Diess zugegeben, fragt sich nur: mit welchen Vorschlägen sollen Österreich und Preussen auftreten, um die nordischen Wirren zu einem gedeihlichen Ende zu bringen, und künftigen Komplikationen, wie auch nachtheiligen Konsequenzen vorzubeugen?

Die Berufung des Herzogs *F. von Augustenburg* auf den neuzubildenden deutschen Bundesstaat, würde zugleich den Beifall Deutschlands erhalten, und allen preussischen Annexionsbestrebungen ein Ziel setzen. Diese Berufung würde auch die ominöse Vorname einer Volksabstimmung in den Herzogthümern entbehrlich machen. Andererseits würde die Anerkennung des Nationalitäten Prinzips von unserer Seite dadurch umgangen, dass die Abtretung von Nordschleswig nicht aus dem Titel der dänischen Nationalität, sondern als Tauschobjekt für das, unzweifelhaft zu Dänemark gehörige und nunmehr mit Holstein zu vereinigende Herzogthum Lauenburg, stattfände. Letzteres ist nemlich vom Wiener Kongresse, als Ersatz für den Verlust Norwegens, mit Dänemark vereinigt worden. Die deutschen Grossmächte verlangen sohin bei der Konferenz *ganz* Schleswig, und willigen nur gegen Abtretung Lauenburgs in die Abtrennung von Nordschleswig, wobei die Richtung der Demarkationslinie zudem nicht nach Sprachgränzen, sondern nach strategischen Rücksichten gezogen werden soll. . . .

Durch exklusive Vertretung des Rechtsstandpunktes kommt man in der schleswig holsteinischen Sache nur sehr spät oder gar nicht zum Schlusse; es ist daher angezeigt sich jetzt mehr auf den *politischen* Standpunkt zu stellen, und die unerwartet günstigen Chancen für eine friedliche und Deutschland zufriedenstellende Lösung der heiklen Sache,

⁴ See chapter ii above.

nicht unbenützt zu lassen. Wenn Russland und Oldenburg, als die *nächsten* Anwärter, den Herzog von Augustenburg anerkennen wollen, so ist kein Grund mehr dem fait accompli seiner Sukzession, unsererseits die Anerkennung zu versagen. Während wir diese unsere Anschauungen über die Behandlung der fraglichen Angelegenheit, in einer Note an das preussische Kabinet entwickelten, richtete das Letztere an uns seine spontan beschlossenen, gleichartigen Anträge; hiemit ist also das einträgliche Vorgehen in der Londoner Konferenz gesichert.

Im Lauf der hierüber in der *Minister Konferenz* gepflogenen Besprechung, erklärten sich *sämmtliche Stimmführer* mit den Anträgen des Ministers Grafen Rechberg einverstanden, wobei der *Staatsminister* jedoch den Wunsch aussprach, es möge durch Erwirkung der Verzichte von den näheren Agnaten, auch der Rechtsstandpunkt neben dem politischen, *möglichst* gewahrt werden. . . .

[The remainder of the discussion concerned the cost of the war and how to meet it, and the prolongation of the armistice.]

No. 3

AUSTRIAN COUNCIL OF MINISTERS, Vienna, October 31, 1864

Protocol *

[*Haus-, Hof-, und Staatsarchiv*, Vienna: *Kabinettskanzlei*, K.Z. 3366, M.R.Z. 1310]

[Vorsitzender: Seine Majestät der Kaiser,

Gegenwärtige: Seine K.K. Hoheit der Durchlauchtigste

Herr Erzherzog Rainer,

Der Minister des Äussern Graf Mensdorff-Pouilly,

Der Minister der Polizei Freiherr von Mecséry,

Der Staatsminister Ritter von Schmerling,

Der Minister Ritter von Lasser,

Der Finanzminister Edler von Plener,

Der Staatsraths Präsident Freiherr von Lichtenfels,

Der Minister Graf Esterházy,

Der Marineminister Baron Burger,

Der Minister Ritter von Hein,

Der ungarische Hofkanzler Graf Zichy,

Der Leiter des Handelsministeriums Baron Kalchberg,

* Unpublished. Very brief summary in Friedrich Engel-Janosi: "Die Krise des Jahres 1864 in Oesterreich," in *Historische Studien* A. F. Pribram zum 70. Geburtstag dargebracht p. 174. See also chapter iv above.

Der Stellvertreter des Kriegsministeriums
FML. Baron Schiller,

Abwesend: Die Minister Graf Nádasdy und Ritter von
Franck.

Gegenstände der Berathung: I. Grundzüge der künftigen
äusseren Politik Österreichs,

II. Verbesserung der Pressleitung.]

I. *Seine K.K. Apostolische Majestät* geruhen dem Ministerrathe Allergnädigst zu eröffnen, dass Allerhöchstdieselben, bei Gelegenheit des soeben stattgefundenen Ministerwechsels, *die Ziele welche Österreich in seiner äusseren Politik zu verfolgen, und die Stellung die es den übrigen europäischen Mächten gegenüber einzunehmen hat, einer neuerlichen, reifen Überlegung unterzogen haben.*

Das Ergebniss dieser Erwägung, welches mit den Ansichten des Ministers des Äussern, Grafen Mensdorff, übereinstimmt, ist Folgendes:

Die bleibende Erhaltung des Friedens ist für die Monarchie, behufs ihrer ruhigen inneren Entwicklung, ein dringendes Bedürfniss, und Österreich soll sich daher nur aus den wichtigsten Gründen an einem Kriege betheiligen.

Zur Erreichung dieses Hauptzweckes ist dahin zu wirken, dass alle grösseren politischen Komplikationen in Europa vermieden werden.

Um eine Friedenspolitik mit Erfolg durchführen zu können, ist es nothwendig, dass sich, durch das Zusammenhalten und einträchtige Vorgehen Österreichs mit ganz Deutschland, im Mittel von Europa eine Macht bilde, welche geeignet ist den anderen Mächten und besonders Frankreich, zu imponiren.

Diese Einigung ist aber durch Unser fortgesetztes inniges Einverständniss mit Preussen, in allen wichtigen Fragen bedingt, und es muss daher, namentlich auch in den deutschen Angelegenheiten, jede Sache, bevor sie an den deutschen Bund gebracht wird, künftig mit Preussen verhandelt werden.

Die Verwendung der deutschen Mittelstaaten als ein Aktionsmittel gegen Preussen, hat sich durch die Erfahrung als nachtheilig gezeigt und zur Selbstüberhebung derselben geführt. Die den Mittelstaaten gebührende Stellung im Bunde soll nicht beeinträchtigt werden und kein zu diktatorischer Vorgang gegen dieselben stattfinden; aber man umgebe sie nicht mit dem Nimbus einer politischen Bedeutung, die diese kleinen Staaten nicht besitzen!

In den Verhandlungen bezüglich der deutschen Zollangelegenheit ist dahin zu streben, dass Österreich auf der Bahn zur künftigen Zolleinigung, wenigstens keine Rückschritte mache; übrigens ist die Zollfrage nicht sowohl als politischer Prüfstein der Allianz mit Preussen, sondern zum Zweck der Erzielung materieller Vortheile zu behandeln.

Über die so wichtige Frage: was nunmehr in den Herzogthümern Schleswig und Holstein zu geschehen habe? müsse man vor Allem mit Preussen in's Klare kommen, und erst nach erzielter Verständigung darüber, an den deutschen Bund gehen.

Österreich muss in dieser Frage mit Preussen vorgehen, ohne sich jedoch in's Schlepptau nehmen zu lassen und seine eigenen Interessen aus den Augen zu verlieren.—

Es liegt in Unserem Interesse, mit Frankreich ein möglichst gutes Verhältniss aufrecht zu erhalten, wenngleich eine eigentliche Allianz mit diesem Staate—bei der grundsätzlichen Verschiedenheit in den Prinzipien der beiden Monarchien—eine vollkommene Unmöglichkeit ist. Die Existenz des Kaisers Napoleon beruht auf der Theorie und der Basis des sogenannten modernen Rechtes—Suffrage universel—während die geschichtliche Entstehung und die Zusammensetzung der österreichischen Monarchie, ihre Existenz von den Prinzipien der Legitimität und der Aufrechthaltung der Verträge abhängig macht.—

In Italien ist es Unsere Aufgabe, den dort sich ergebenden Ereignissen gegenüber eine ruhige, zuwartende Stellung einzunehmen. Der Zürcher Friede ist dort Unser Rechtsboden und die einzige annehmbare Basis einer Verständigung mit Frankreich. Leider ist Österreich nicht in der Lage dermalen die Stipulationen dieses Friedensschlusses zur Durchführung zu bringen, aber aufgeben soll es dieselben nicht.—

Mit England und Russland steht Österreich auf einem guten Fusse, und obgleich diese beiden Mächte uns gegenwärtig materiel wenig nützen können, ist doch voller Grund vorhanden das gute Einvernehmen mit denselben zu kultiviren, nachdem sie, als Grossmächte, im europäischen Concert immerhin ein gewichtiges Wort mitzureden haben und Beide den Frieden zu erhalten wünschen. Ihre Hinneigung zu Österreich wächst mit dem sich mehr entwickelnden Misstrauen gegen Frankreich.—

In den vorstehenden Sätzen sei der Gang der von Österreich zu verfolgenden äusseren Politik angedeutet. Seine Majestät der Kaiser gewärtigen, dass der Minister des Äusseren, bei Lösung seiner schwierigen Aufgabe, durch die übrigen Minister werde unterstützt werden.

II. Schon mehrmals, namentlich zuletzt vor der Reise nach Ischl, haben Seine k.k. Apostolische Majestät den Ah. Wunsch ausgesprochen, dass auf eine *Besserung der Tendenz der österreichischen Presse* gewirkt werde; die Zustände seien aber seitdem, statt besser, nur noch schlechter geworden. Sei es doch soweit gekommen, dass ein subventionirtes Journal, wie der Bothschafter, eine Reihe von Leitartikeln brachte, welche die schärfste Kritik der äussern Politik Österreichs enthielten!

Seine Majestät der Kaiser geruhten sofort die Allerhöchste Willensmeinung auszusprechen, dass die bei der Pressleitung direkt theilhabenden Minister, ohne Verzug zusammentreten, um endlich eine Besserung dieses bedauerlichen Zustandes zu bewirken.

No. 4

AUSTRIAN COUNCIL OF MINISTERS, Vienna, January 11, 1865

Protocol^a

[*Haus-, Hof-, und Staatsarchiv*, Vienna: *Kabinettskanzlei*, K.Z. 123, M.R.Z. 1332]

[Chairman: Archduke Rainer. Ministers in attendance: the foreign minister, Count Mensdorff; the minister of police, Baron Meczery; the minister of state, Ritter von Schmerling. Subject of the discussion: "Stand der oesterreichischen Politik"].

Der Minister des Aeussern stellte in einem längeren Exposé den gegenwärtigen Stand der Politik in der schleswig-holstein'schen Frage mit dem Bemerken dar, dass die Verhandlungen noch nicht so weit gediehen seien, um eine directe Pression auf Preussen ausüben zu können. Er habe seit Übernahme seines Portefeuille grundsätzlich die preussische Allianz festzuhalten getrachtet, weil Er hierin die Bürgschaft für den Frieden erkenne. Die Ereignisse des Jahres 1864 haben den Werth dieses Bündnisses dadurch gekennzeichnet, dass das Ausland es nicht wagte, in diese Angelegenheit thätig einzugreifen. Wenn man im Stande sein werde, diese Allianz zu erhalten, sei die Sicherheit Deutschlands und auch jene von Oesterreich begründet. Manche Stimmen rathen zwar für ein Anlehen an Frankreich, dazu fehlen jedoch geeignete Anhaltspuncte, und dasselbe könnte ohne ein materielles Opfer entweder von eigenem Gebiete oder von deutschem Lande nicht erreicht werden. In letzterem Falle würde jedoch unsere deutsche Stellung nicht befestigt, sondern vielmehr gefährdet werden. Die Lage sei insofern schwierig, weil Preussen durch seine geographische Lage und durch die öffentliche Meinung des eigenen Landes unendliche Vortheile für sich habe. Bedauerlich sei es jedenfalls, dass vor Beginn des Krieges gegen Dänemark zwischen Oesterreich und Preussen keine festen Puncte vereinbart wurden, insbesondere jener, dass von keiner Seite eine territoriale Vergrößerung eintreten dürfe. Bei Gelegenheit als die Gränze von Jütland überschritten und dadurch faktisch vom London'er Protokolle abgegangen wurde, wäre der rechte Zeitpunct hiezu gewesen.

Der Standpunct der oesterreichischen Regierung könne nur der sein, mit Geduld und Zähigkeit an dem vorgestekten Ziele festzuhalten, und davon durch nichts sich abbringen zu lassen. Hiemit werde man aus der schwierigen Lage schon herauskommen, zumal die äusseren Verhältnisse nicht schlechter geworden seien.

Es sei im preussischen Character gelegen, den Mund sehr voll zu nehmen, wenn sie aber sehen werden, dass Oesterreich von seinem Ziele nicht abgeht, werden sie nachgeben. Wohl hoffen sie aus dem Zustande-

^a Unpublished.

kommen der Kammern in ihren Annexionsgelüsten bestärkt zu werden.

Der Polizeiminister meinte, dass die beruhigende Seite der Situation für uns darin liege, dass es für Preussen die grösste Schwierigkeit biethet, für die Realisirung ihrer Annexions-Bestrebungen eine anständige Form zu finden. Nur ein ganz unvorhergesehenes wirkliches Ereigniss könnte Preussen eine Handhahe dazu biethen. Votant erkannte übrigens gleichfalls den vom Grafen Mensdorff bezeichneten Gang der oesterr. Politik als den richtigen an, wünschte aber über den muthmasslichen Verlauf der Successionsfrage eine Aufklärung.

Der Minister des Aeussern bemerkte, Er halte den Herzog von Augustenburg als den zur Succession meist Berechtigten. Preussen habe sich jedoch über die beantragte Einsetzung desselben noch nicht ausgesprochen. Oesterreich habe aber kein Compelle ihn einseitig einzusetzen. Wenn Preussen aber nicht nachgeben und die Sache von Oesterreich an den Bund gebracht werden wollte, wäre der Bruch mit Preussen fertig.

Der Staatsminister glaubte den Gesichtspunct festhalten zu sollen, von welchem Einflusse die Erledigung dieser Angelegenheit für die Stimmung in Oesterreich sein werde? Die überwiegende Mehrheit der Bevölkerung in Oesterreich nehme kein Interesse daran, ob der Herzog von Augustenburg oder jener von Oldenburg als Regent eingesetzt werde, die öffentliche Stimmung interessire sich nur für einen endlichen entsprechenden Abschluss. Für die Regierung liege aber ein entschiedenes Interesse, dass die Sache vorwärts komme, schon darin, dass die 15 Millionen Gulden Kriegskosten Entschädigung flüssig werden. Ein ängstliches Gefühl sei es übrigens, dass wir bei der Gelegenheit vielleicht ganz leer ausgehen werden, wo doch wir die meisten Lorbeeren errungen haben. Nehmen die Preussen nichts, dann werden wir uns leichter bescheiden, wenn auch für uns nichts erblüht. Ein Bruch mit Preussen wäre wohl jedenfalls sehr bedauerlich, das Zusammengehen mit Preussen dürfe aber auch nicht um jeden Preis geschehen.

Wünschenswerth wäre es jedenfalls, wenn es möglich wäre von den gewechselten Schriftstückchen mehr zu publiciren, insbesondere die neueste Depesche nach Berlin vom Ende Dezbr. v. J., die in einem entschiedenen Tone gehalten sei, den oesterreichischen Standpunct sehr gut durchführe und volle Beruhigung gewähren würde. Übrigens erklärte Votant mit der vom Grafen Mensdorff beabsichtigten Politik ganz einverstanden zu sein.

Der Minister des Aeussern erwiderte, dass man erst die Beantwortung der neuesten Depesche abwarten müsse, bevor die Kundmachung eintreten könne; liesse diese zu lange auf sich warten, so werde man einen Termin hiezu setzen, um die Sache vorwärts zu bringen.

Übrigens könne nicht unbesprochen bleiben, dass die öffentliche Meinung durch die Journalistik vielfach irre geleitet werde, und ein Einwirken auf dieselbe schon aus dem Grunde am Platze wäre, damit die offiziöse Presse nicht unaufhörlich den Gang der Politik angreife.

Der Reise des Prinzen von Preussen nach Wien sei kein politischer Zweck zu unterstellen, derselbe afficire kein Politiker zu sein. Dafür

sei General Moltke mehr Politiker, übrigens auch ein entschiedener Annexionist.

Über Anregung von Seite *des Staatsministers*, bemerkte *Graf Mensdorff* weiter, dass nach seiner Meinung von Seite Italiens oder Frankreichs eine Beunruhigung für unsere italienischen Länder in nächster Zeit aller Wahrscheinlichkeit nach^a zu besorgen sei. Wenn auch die Entlassung von 75,000 Mann in Italien darum keine Bedeutung habe, weil eine ebenso grosse Anzahl aus den jüngeren Altersklassen zu den Fahnen einberufen werde, so brauche doch das neue Königreich seine Truppen, um die Ordnung im eigenen Lande aufrecht zu erhalten.

Auch Frankreich entwaffe theilweise, obgleich die Reduction des Militärbudget um 23 Millionen francs eine geringe Bedeutung habe. Als gewiss könne aber angenommen werden, dass Frankreich sich durch die Konvention mit Italien einen zweijährigen Termin zur Ruhe habe verschaffen wollen, den es zur Lösung seiner Aufgaben im Inneren, insbesondere der Arbeiterfrage bedürfe. Für das nächste Frühjahr sei daher für unsere italienischen Länder⁷ kaum etwas zu besorgen und⁸ besonders um so weniger, wenn wir mit Preussen eine feste Stellung haben.

Es könnte daher wohl als zulässig erscheinen, die Armeepferde im Frühjahr zu verkaufen, wo dann der Preis auch besser sein wird.

Der Polizeiminister fand es bedenklich, beim Militärbudget zu viel zu streichen; die Herabsetzung des Mannschaftsstandes könnte leichter vorgenommen werden, als die zu starke Herabsetzung des Trains und der Pferde, wo bei einer neuen Anschaffung schon geringe Differenzen bei den Einheitspreisen gleich Millionen Gulden ausmachen.

Der Staatsminister glaubte, dass bei der dermaligen politischen Lage die Armee für die Defensive in Italien nicht so gross zu sein braucht, und dass die Herabsetzung des Pferdestandes wohl möglich und von April bis Dezember für 8 Monate das Budget ungemein erleichtern würde.

No. 5

CHOTEK TO MENSENDORFF, Berlin, January 20, 1865, No. 6A *Geheim*

Despatch. Original^a

[*Haus-, Hof-, und Staatsarchiv*, Vienna: P.A. III. 88]

[THE Austrian chargé reports in great detail a long interview with Bismarck, held late in the evening of January 18.¹⁰ The bulk of the

^a The word "nicht" is here crossed out, but is obviously needed for the correct sense.

⁷ The word "nichts" is here crossed out.

⁸ The word "zwar" is here crossed out.

⁹ Unpublished.

¹⁰ For the diplomatic situation at this time, see chapter v above.

conversation was taken up by remarks of Bismarck in reply to the theoretical arguments of the Austrian note of December 21, on the Schleswig-Holstein question.¹¹ He expressed his deep regret that he had not yet had the opportunity to answer the Austrian note. He had taken a few days off for his health, and von Thile had been away on a 14-day leave. He hoped soon to send the official reply.]

Die Wendung welche hierauf das Gespräch annahm war mehr practischer Natur.

Ich entwickelte neuerdings den schon in meinem Privathriefe an Eure Excellenz wiedergegebenen Gedanken welchen ich Herrn von Bismarck entgegengehalten hatte über die Motive warum wir dringend die Beendigung des dermaligen Status quo in den Herzogthümern wünschten.

Der Herr Minister Präsident wollte meine Argumente nicht gelten lassen. Er begriffe nicht Österreichs Ungeduld das provisorische Condominium zu beendigen. Die Brigade welche die Herzogthümer besetzt halte, sei bei den unerschütterlichen Grundsätzen und tief gewurzelten Gefühlen des Königs, so stark und wiege so schwer wie 100,000 Mann, ja sie wäre nicht einmal nöthig; "ein Gefreiter und 6 Mann genügten denn das werden Sie uns doch glauben dass Preussen die mit uns noch so kürzlich ruhmreich verbundene kais. Uniform heilig und unverletzlich ist." Der Herr Minister Präsident fuhr fort er wäre bereit uns ein ganzes überwachbares System von Garantien vorzuschlagen, dass künftighin weder in der Presse noch in den Militär- und Civil-Administrationen die tendenziöse Agitation werde Platz greifen dürfen.

"Übrigens" fügte Herr von Bismarck mit grösstem Nachdrucke hinzu, "gibt es eine Argumentation über die schlüssliche Feststellung der Zukunft der Herzogthümer welche ich den Äusserungen Ihres kais. Gebieters entnehme, deren schlagende Richtigkeit ich mich nicht zu entziehen vermag; es ist diess ein Wort gerader einfacher ächt kaiserlicher Habsburgischer Hauspolitik": "Nach dem *gemeinsamen* Kriege kann nicht Preussen allein Territorium gewinnen und Österreich leer ausgehen."

Die diesem Gedanken nachgeschriebenen Worte der oesterreichischen Depesche vom 21ten und des Briefes Eurer Excellenz an mich konnten, wie mich der Minister Präsident versicherte nicht ohne Eindruck auf ihn bleiben.

Er nehme daher sein, schon in meinem Privathriefe an Hochdieselben wiedergegebenes Wort die ideelle Gemeinschaft die sich auf den Friedensvertrag gründet in eine reelle Theilung des gemeinschaftlichen Gebietes zu verwandeln erstlich zu einem vertraulichen Vorschlage auf.

Umsonst machte ich die von Eurer Excellenz sofort nach jenem Satze erhobene Einwendung gegen eine derartige Lösung geltend und wies auf den Widerspruch Europas, der fraglichen Länder selbst wie des deutschen Bundes hin. Vergeblich deduzirte ich die rechtliche wie factische Unausführbarkeit einer solchen Combination. Der Herr Minister Präsi-

¹¹ Since Bismarck's arguments are reproduced in his official note of January 26 (G. W. V, pp. 60-64), they are not printed here.

dent, welcher seinen in meiner letzten Unterredung noch sehr energisch festgehaltenen *finanziellen* Compensationsvorschlag durch unsern Widerspruch als endgültig beseitigt anzusehen und denselben gar nicht mehr berühren zu wollen schien, war von diesem Modus der Lösung der Zukunftsfrage der Herzogthümer zwischen Oesterreich und Preussen so eingenommen, dass dieser Gedanke nunmehr bei ihm völlig die Oberhand gewonnen zu haben schien. Von Europa lasse — nach Herrn von Bismarcks Ansicht — diese Combination nichts befürchten, einem Einspruche der andern deutschen Staaten, messe er, nach seinen Anschauungen über das Bundesverhältniss keinen rechtlichen und thatsächlichen Einfluss zu, und betreffend das etwaige Widerstreben des Landes, sage er, oppositionelles Geschrei seien ja beide Regierungen gewöhnt, mit dem ihm charakteristischen Leichtsinn hinzufügend: „auf etwas mehr kommt es da nicht an!"; die Hauptsache und der Kriegszweck war doch diese Länder von dem auf ihnen lastenden fremden Drucke zu befreien und diess Resultat bleibe erreicht.

Ohne es mit bestimmten Worten zu sagen, gab mir der Herr Minister zu verstehen wie durch diese Lösung mit Bezug auf die deutsche Stellung Oesterreichs jenes Gleichgewicht nicht gestört würde welches der deutsche Bundesvertrag zwischen den beiden Mächten begründet hat, und welches eine unverrückbare Grundlage der Sicherheit und Grösse Oesterreichs bildet. Er wies auf die eventuellen maritimen und commerziellen und politischen Vortheile eines definitiven Oesterreichischen Territorialbesitzes an den nördlichen deutschen Meeren, sowie auf die Befriedigung des oesterreichischen Selbstgefühls in diesem Arrangement hin.

„Ja“ rief Herr von Bismarck, „es klingt paradox aber es wäre mir selbst vom egoistischen preussischen Standpunkte lieber Oesterreich bekommt definitiv die Hälfte der Herzogthümer als dass wir diese ganzen Länder allein erhielten, denn ich sehe unvermeidliche grosse politische Ereignisse in den nächsten Jahren voraus, wo wir die Allianz mit Oesterreich nur unter der Bedingung zu der vollen Höhe ihrer gegenseitigen auch Preussen zu Opfer verpflichtenden Aufgabe bringen können, wenn wir dem preussischen Volke sagen können, für diese grossen Oesterreich gebrachten Opfer bezahlt uns dasselbe mit den andern ihm bisher gehörenden Theil der Elbeherzogthümer.“

Herr von Bismarck endete dieses merkwürdige Gespräch indem er mich bat, dass wenn das kais. Kabinet der von ihm angebotenen Erwerbung nicht an und für sich und für einen definitiven Besitz einen Werth beimessen wollte, man in Wien doch den hohen politischen Werth der factischen Innehabung eines so werthvollen Tauschobjectes für die Zukunft nicht verkennen möge.

No. 6

WERTHER TO BISMARCK, Vienna, February 27, 1865, No. 57

Despatch. Original¹²

[*Hauptarchiv des Auswärtigen Amtes*, Berlin, No. A 589]¹³

[BARON WERTHER acknowledges receipt of Bismarck's instructions, dated February 22, giving the conditions under which Prussia would be willing to agree to the formation of a state of Schleswig-Holstein.¹⁴ These he communicated to Count Mensdorff on February 25, and he reports Mensdorff's unfavorable first impressions. In a second interview, today, Mensdorff said that a complete acceptance of these conditions by Austria would be impossible, in view of public opinion in Austria and Germany].

. . . Graf Mensdorff deutete mir heute auch an, dass mit der Ausführung unserer Bedingungen der zukünftige Souverain Schleswig-Holsteins zum Statthalter herabsinke und würde sich dann bald seine Stellung als so unhaltbar zeigen, dass er demnächst durch uns mit Geldabfindung ganz beseitigt werden würde.

Als ich gestern beim Fürsten Schwarzenberg die Ehre hatte Seiner Majestät dem Kaiser zu begegnen, hat Er mich wie gewöhnlich sehr gnädig begrüsst und kam sodann sofort auf unsere besagten Vorschläge zu sprechen. Er hat mir sein entschiedenes Bedauern ausgedrückt, dass unsere Forderungen so weitgehend ausgefallen wären, wie er es gar nicht für möglich gehalten hätte. Er wäre bei der Lektüre unserer Vorschläge "gar nicht aus dem Staunen herausgekommen" und Er müsse zu seinem Bedauern erklären, das Er, bei dem besten Willen zur Verständigung mit uns, unsere gestellten Bedingungen für *ganz unannehmbar* fände. Seine Majestät hob dabei besonders sämtliche Bestimmungen über die Fragen des Heeres und der Flotte Schleswig-Holsteins und deren Vereinigung mit der preussischen Armee und Marine hervor. Die Territorial-Abtretungen an verschiedenen Punkten schienen ihm unnötig. Als ich Seiner Majestät bemerkte, dass diese zum Schutz Schleswig-Holsteins gegen scandinavische und andere Angriffe und zur Errichtung von Befestigungen auf unsere Kosten, doch durch die Verhältnisse sehr angezeigt wären, wollte der Kaiser dies nicht recht zugeben.—Die Verschmelzung des Post- und Telegraphen-Wesens der Herzogtümer mit der preussischen Verwaltung erregte bei Ihm auch Bedenken. Der einzige Punkt, den Er unbedingt zugab, war der Zutritt . . . zum Zollverein; die Bestimmungen über den Nord-Ostsee-Canal hat der Kaiser gar nicht berührt. Eine kurze Unterredung auf dem Ballfest gewährte keine Zeit, mit dem Kaiser diese Fragen gründlicher zu besprechen.

¹² Unpublished.

¹³ The archive authorities requested the author not to cite the individual folio in which this despatch is filed.

¹⁴ See chapter vi above.

Bei dieser Gelegenheit hat auch der Graf Moritz Esterhazy die Initiative ergriffen, mir gegenüber die gegenwärtige Phase der schleswig-holsteinischen Verhandlungen zu berühren. Ich muss vorausschicken, dass er Mitglied des Ministeriums ohne Portefeuille ist, im Ganzen wohl in diesem Ministerium als der *einzige* wirklich politische Kopf betrachtet werden kann und sich in seiner früheren diplomatischen Carriere ganz besonders ausgezeichnet hat, zuletzt als Kaiserlicher Botschafter in Rom, woselbst er Muster von scharfsinnigen Depeschen, (nur zu selten) geschrieben haben soll. Sowohl Graf Mensdorff als früher Graf Rechberg stimmen mit ihm in ihren Ansichten überein und haben ihn stets in wichtigen Fragen mit zu Rate gezogen. Er würde sich zu einem vortrefflichen Minister der auswärtigen Angelegenheiten eignen, wenn er nicht sehr kränklich und ganz besonders arbeitsscheu wäre, welches letztere auch seine Abberufung von Rom durch Graf Buol veranlasst hatte. Als bezeichnend kann ich noch anführen, wie er mir noch vor acht Tagen sagte, dass im Kaiserlichen Cabinet nur drei Männer wären, die es aufrichtig mit der preussischen Allianz meinten, das wären der Kaiser, Graf Mensdorff, und er. Wir kennen uns von frühester Jugend her und schenkt er mir freundschaftliches Vertrauen. In diesem Sinne und natürlich ganz ohne offiziellen Charakter berührte er unsere neuesten Eröffnungen, die er bereits durch Graf Mensdorff vollständig kannte. Er sagte, die vorgeschlagenen Bestimmungen wolle er gar nicht diskutieren, denn in seinen Augen konnte man ihnen keinen anderen Namen geben, als einfache Annexion, welche Oesterreich *jetzt* nicht ohne Aequivalent zuzugestehen vermöge. Er würde auch völlige Annexion unserer jetzt vorgeschlagenen verhüllten bei Weitem vorziehen. Die Annahme unserer Bedingungen würde für Oesterreich eine Demütigung sein, die es vor der hiesigen öffentlichen Meinung nicht ertragen könne. Also davon könne keine Rede sein und doch möchte er vor Allem die preussische Allianz aufrecht erhalten. Ich erwiderte ihm, dazu schiene mir die Annahme unserer Forderungen oder die einfache Annexion das beste Mittel. Er würde selbst einsehen, dass wir kein territoriales Aequivalent dafür an Oesterreich geben können, deshalb schiene mir die Geldentschädigung noch immer der richtige Ausweg. Graf Esterhazy entgegnete, dass er eine solche, wenn sie hoch gegriffen wäre, nicht abweisen würde, doch wäre darauf nicht mehr zurückzukommen, da der Kaiser es mit seiner Ehre und Würde nicht vereinbar fände, für unseren territorialen Zuwachs sich mit Geldentschädigung zu begnügen. Ich bedauerte diesen Umstand, indem sich bei internationalen Ausgleichungen Geldentschädigung häufig als ein sehr nützliches Auskunftsmittel bewährt hatte und dabei Ehre und Würde doch vielleicht vorgefasste Auffassung sein könnten, doch gab ich zu, dass hierüber der Kaiser allein eine entscheidende Stimme habe. Ich bemerkte sodann dem Grafen Esterhazy, wenn dieser letztere Ausweg also wegfalle, so könnte ich nicht begreifen, mit welcher Hast und Eile Oesterreich sich des Pfandes des Mitbesitzes Schleswig-Holsteins entäussern wolle. Mir schiene auch für Oesterreich das richtige Interesse, das condominium und das provisorium möglichst zu ver-

längern. Graf Esterhazy gestand mir nun ein, dass unter den gegebenen Umständen er sehr geneigt wäre, diese Ansicht zu teilen und sie fange an hier zum Durchbruch zu kommen. Er beiefre sich dieselbe zu bevorzugen, es würde ihm nur die Behauptung aufgestellt, dass durch Verlängerung des Provisoriums Annexion unvermeidlich würde. Er wolle mir nun darüber als Freund und nur akademisch gesprochen, seine innerste Überzeugung aufdecken, dass nämlich über kurz oder lang die Einverleibung der Herzogtümer in Preussen geschehen würde und beinahe geschehen müsste. Doch wegen Wahrung des notwendigen Gleichgewichts Oesterreichs und Preussens in der Machtstellung in Deutschland, wäre diese Annexion nicht eher statthaft als bis Oesterreich auch dafür ein territoriales Aequivalent bekommen könnte. Letzteres würde nur möglich sein bei zukünftigen Eventualitäten respective Umwälzungen, die manche Veränderung in Deutschland hervorbringen könnten.—Diese individuellen Ansichten des Grafen Esterhazy haben nur insofern Wert, als er in nahen Beziehungen zum Grafen Mensdorff steht und auch der Kaiser auf sein Urteil viel hält.

In meiner heutigen Unterredung mit Graf Mensdorff konnte ich bereits einige Anklänge von den Auffassungen seines Collegen, des Grafen Esterhazy bemerken. Als ich ihm nämlich sagte, dass ungeachtet der Schwierigkeiten, welche hier eine Verständigung über unsere gestellten Anforderungen hervorzubringen scheine, wir vor allem suchen mussten, unsere Allianz aufrecht zu erhalten, fügte ich hinzu, eine unbestimmte Verlängerung des Provisoriums in der Herzogtümern, freilich mit Vorsicht, Umsicht, und Unparteilichkeit gehandhabt, käme mir als das sicherste Mittel vor, diesen Zweck einstweilen zu erreichen. Der Kaiserliche Minister entgegnete mir darauf, dass als pis-aller wohl kein anderer Ausweg sich finden lassen würde so bedenklich er auch finde, die Lösung der schleswig-holstein'schen Frage einer weiten Zukunft zu überlassen.

No. 7

FRANZ JOSEPH TO KING WILLIAM I OF PRUSSIA, Vienna,
April 24, 1865

Letter. Original¹⁵

[*Brandenburg-Preussisches Hausarchiv, Charlottenburg*]¹⁶

Theurer Freund und Bruder,

Du wollest meines besten Dankes für die freundlichen Zeilen versichert sein, welche Fürst Schwarzenberg mir überbracht hat.¹⁷ Nach seiner

¹⁵ In Franz Joseph's handwriting.

¹⁶ Unpublished. As no draft of this letter is found in the Vienna archives, it was probably the Emperor's own inspiration.

¹⁷ There is no trace of William's letter in the Vienna archives. For Prince Schwarzenberg's mission to Berlin, to attend the unveiling of the Düppel monument see chapter vi above

Beschreibung gehört die Feier, welcher er beizuwohnen das Glück hatte, zu den schönsten, die man sehen kann, und ich beglückwünsche Dich von Herzen zu den freudigen und erhebenden Eindrücken, welche dieser Ehrentag Deiner braven Armee in Dir hervorrufen musste.

In der Gründungsurkunde hast Du zugleich unserer Vereinigung ein Denkmal gewidmet, und gewiss wirst Du mich verstehen, und meine gute Meinung nicht verkennen, wenn ich eine so natürliche Gelegenheit ergreife, um Dir die Interessen dieser Verbindung von neuem anzuempfehlen.

Unsere nicht genug zu schätzende Einigkeit erscheint mir als eine Wohlthat, die wir beide der Welt schuldig sind; wir können sie ihr aber nur erweisen, wenn wir gegenseitige Rücksichten gleichmässig walten lassen. Die Politik wird dann nicht verderben können, was die Waffen-gemeinschaft so gut gemacht hat.

Alles Herzliche von der Kaiserin. Ich empfehle Dich und die Deinen in Gottes Schutz, und bleibe in unveränderlicher Freundschaft

Dein treu ergebener Bruder

Wien den 24. April

Franz Joseph

1865

No. 8

PRUSSIAN COUNCIL OF MINISTERS, Berlin, May 29, 1865

Protocol. Certified copy²⁸

[*Hauptarchiv des Auswärtigen Amtes*, Berlin, No. A 1717a]²⁹

In der heutigen Conscilsitzung, zu welcher sich auf allerhöchsten Befehl Seine Königliche Hoheit der Kronprinz, sämmtliche Staats-Minister, der Chef des Generalstabes der Armee, General-Lieutenant Freiherr von Moltke, und die General-Adjutanten, General-Lieutenants, Freiherr von Manteuffel und von Alvensleben im hiesigen Königlichen Palais versammelt hatten, wurde Folgendes verhandelt.

Seine Majestät der König geruheten, auf die, durch die bisherigen Verhandlungen über die Zukunft der Elb-Herzogthümer herbeigeführte Lage der allgemeinen Politik und auf die ernsten Folgen aufmerksam zu machen, welche bei einer möglichen Wendung derselben eintreten könnten. Allerhöchstdieselben bemerkten, dass die Schleswig-Holsteinische Sache von Anfang an nur vom *deutschen*, nicht vom *preussischen* Standpunkte aus aufgefasst worden, dass aber schon vor dem Uebergange über die Eider in der, auf Grund einer Conscilberathung nach Wien ergangenen Depesche vom 31. Januar v. J. auf die Eventualität einer Verän-

²⁸ Unpublished, except two small excerpts in *Bismarck, die gesammelten Werke* V, pp. 189, 190, by Friedrich Thimme. Summarized in Sybel (*Volksausgabe*) IV, pp. 87-88.

²⁹ The archive authorities requested the author not to cite the specific folio from which this document is drawn.

derung dieses Standpunktes und dieser Auffassung hingedeutet und das schliessliche Maass der in Folge des wirklichen Krieges von Preussen zu erhebenden Ansprüche von der Grösse der Opfer Preussens abhängig gemacht sei. Diese Opfer an Geld und Menschen seien weit über dasjenige hinausgegangen, was man zu Anfang des Krieges erwartet habe. Dadurch aber und durch die glorreichen Tage von Düppel und Alsen habe die Schleswig-Holsteinische Frage eine Wendung erhalten, die zu ihrer Auffassung als einer mehr *preussischen* Frage berechtige. Auch in der öffentlichen Meinung, in der Ansicht der Nation sei seit jenen kriegेरischen Thaten, namentlich seit dem Siege von Alsen, ein grosser Umschwung eingetreten.

Während man früher den Ansprüchen des Erbprinzen von Augustenburg das Wort geredet habe, werde jetzt von der Nation fast einstimmig Annexion der Herzogthümer an Preussen verlangt, und nur die Demokratie, welche Preussen nicht wolle gross werden lassen unter der gegenwärtigen Regierung, trete diesem Verlangen entgegen. Bis jetzt habe die Preussische Regierung die Annexion nicht als ihr Ziel bezeichnet, ohne jedoch dieselbe als eine mögliche Eventualität auszuschliessen. Vielmehr habe die Preussische Regierung eine rechtliche Prüfung der von mehreren Prätendenten auf den Besitz der Herzogthümer erhobenen Ansprüche vorbereitet und zugleich gewisse Forderungen aufgestellt zu dem Zweck, Preussen den für seine eigene Sicherheit und für die Interessen Deutschlands und der Elbherzogthümer selbst nothwendigen Einfluss auf dieselben zu gewähren. Jetzt, wo die Missgunst in einem grossen Theile der deutschen Kleinstaaten und die Wiederkehr der alten österreichischen, preussenfeindlichen Politik diesen Preussischen Forderungen, wenigstens grossentheils, entgegenetrete, entstehe die Frage, was Preussen für die Zukunft der Herzogthümer verlangen solle, ob Annexion *oder* nur Bewilligung der bisher gestellten, in der veröffentlichten Depesche vom 22. Februar d. J. und deren Beilage formulirten Forderungen — und ob zur Durchführung des einen oder des anderen auch die Gefahr eines Krieges nicht gescheut werden solle?

Ueber diese Fragen verlangten des Königs Majestät die Ansichten Allerhöchstihren versammelten Rathgebern zu vernehmen.

Der Minister-Präsident nahm zuerst das Wort und bemerkte:

Das Mindeste, was Preussen in der Schleswig-Holsteinischen Frage in Anspruch zu nehmen habe, sei die Garantie dafür, dass es durch die Befreiung der Herzogthümer von der Dänischen Herrschaft nicht schlechter zu stehen komme, als es früher zu dem damals befreundeten Dänemark gestanden habe. Eine solche Verschlechterung würde theils in der Schöpfung eines neuen deutschen Mittelstaates, sofern nicht Preussen ein entscheidender Einfluss auf denselben gesichert sei, theils in der Veränderung der Verhältnisse zu Dänemark liegen, indem an die Stelle eines befreundeten Nachbarstaats eine feindliche Macht getreten sei, gegen welche Preussen einer stärkeren Deckung bedürfe, als solche eine selbstständige Schleswig-Holsteinische Armee werde gewähren können. Preussen müsse deshalb, um die Bresche in seiner eigenen Sicherheit zu

decken, entweder eigene Truppen und feste Punkte in den Herzogthümern haben oder einen dominirenden Einfluss auf die Schleswig-Holsteinischen Truppen erlangen.

Ausserdem seien die Herzogthümer die für Preussen nothwendige Basis zur Gründung einer für die Sicherstellung der deutschen und preussischen Interessen unerlässlichen Preussischen Flotte. Auf diesen Motiven beruhe die Formulirung der in der Depesche vom 22. Februar d. J. und deren Beilage aufgestellten Bedingungen. Gegen einen Theil derselben werde vom Oesterreichischen Cabinet Widerspruch erhoben. Am anstössigsten sei demselben das Verlangen der Leistung des Fahnen-eides und die geforderte Verschmelzung der Schleswig-Holsteinischen Truppen mit der Preussischen Armee. Es würde nicht unzulässig sein, diese beiden, besonders anstössigen Punkte fallen zu lassen und sich mit dem Erwerb von Kiel, von anderen festen Stellungen und mit der Verfügung über den zum Flottendienst geeigneten Theil der Bevölkerung zu begnügen. Der dadurch und durch Bewilligung der nicht ernstlich beanstandeten Forderungen für Preussen zu erlangende Gewinn würde immer noch als ein hinreichender Preis für den vorjährigen Krieg anzusehen sein, der ja an sich schon wegen seiner wohlthätigen Einwirkung auf die Armee und die ganze Nation als ein heilsames Ereignis angesehen werden müsse. Es wäre möglich, die Bewilligung der Preussischen Forderungen in *dieser* Beschränkung durchzusetzen und solche *im friedlichen Wege* zu erlangen, wenn man in Wien den ernsten Entschluss zu ihrer Durchführung in einer jeden Zweifel ausschliessenden Weise kund gebe, indem, wenn *Oesterreich* damit einverstanden sei, auch von den deutschen Mittelstaaten und selbst von der Schleswig-Holsteinischen Volks-Vertretung eine zustimmende Erklärung erwartet werden könne.

Es sei nun die Frage, ob die Preussische Regierung sich auf dieses vielleicht in friedlichem Wege zu erreichende Ziel beschränken oder ob sie sich ihr Ziel höher und weiter hinaus stecken solle?

Die öffentliche Meinung fordere die volle Annexion, sie würde durch die Bewilligung der von Preussen gestellten Minimalbedingungen nicht befriedigt werden und obwohl die Annexion bisher seitens der Preussischen Regierung nicht verlangt und der Unterschied zwischen beiden Alternativen in der That nicht gross sei, so würde doch das Aufgeben der Herzogthümer auch nach Erlangung jener Bedingungen, besonders in Rücksicht auf die Stellung, die der Erbprinz von Augustenburg in der ganzen Angelegenheit eingenommen habe, den Schein einer theilweisen Niederlage der Preussischen Politik hervorrufen. Wollte man die öffentliche Meinung befriedigen, so müsse man die Annexion durchführen auf die Gefahr eines Krieges im grossen Styl.—An sich lasse sich eine *dreifache* Art der Ausführung der Annexion, ein *dreifacher* Weg ihrer Vollziehung denken. *Zuerst* im Falle der Bewilligung der Preussischen Minimalbedingungen und der Constituirung eines besonderen Schleswig-Holsteinischen Staates. Die Belastung desselben mit neuen, auf einen Capitalbetrag von mindestens 70 bis 80 Millionen Thalern anzuschlagenden Schulden, das Verhältniss der Bevölkerung zu der Preussischen Ober-

herrlichkeit, die Zwiespältigkeit der Beziehungen des Landes zu seiner eigenen und zu der Preussischen Regierung und das dadurch erzeugte Misstrauen gegen Preussen würde unfehlbare Reibungen und Konflikte veranlassen, die zuletzt zu der wirklichen Annexion führen müssten. Ein *zweiter* Weg zur Annexion würde darin bestehen, dass Preussen die übrigen Prätendenten in friedlicher Weise durch reichliche Dotationen abfände und dadurch vielleicht die Zustimmung Oesterreichs zu der Einverleibung der Herzogthümer erreichte. Preussen würde in diesem Falle von letzteren den Ersatz der Kriegskosten nicht fordern können, es würde ausserdem Oesterreich mindestens wegen der Kriegskosten zu entschädigen haben und im Ganzen ein Geldopfer von nahezu 70 bis 80 Millionen Thalern bringen, womit dann nur die *Differenz* zwischen der *Annexion* und der ihrem politischen Werthe nach nicht viel geringer anzuschlagenden Erfüllung der diesseits gestellten Minimalbedingungen bezahlt wäre. Ein *dritter* Weg, um zur Annexion zu gelangen, würde darin bestehen, dass die Preussische Regierung an den gestellten Bedingungen ohne Abänderung festhielte und eine Gelegenheit zu einem kriegesischen Conflict mit Oesterreich abwartete. Ein solcher Krieg würde bei der politischen Lage Oesterreichs in Italien und da es weder von Russland noch von Frankreich Beistand zu erwarten habe, das Oesterreichische Cabinet in grosse Verlegenheit bringen. Dagegen würde für Preussen der gegenwärtige Moment zu einem kriegesischen Zusammenstoss mit Oesterreich, welcher bei der traditionellen preussenfeindlichen Politik des Wiener Cabinets früher oder später doch kaum zu vermeiden sein werde, günstigere Chancen darbieten.

*²⁰ Aller dieser Erwägungen ungeachtet, könne er, als Minister Sr. Majestät, nur dazu rathen, den Versuch zur Erlangung der von ihm oben als unerlässlich bezeichneten Minimalbedingungen zu machen und erst, wenn dieser Versuch gänzlich scheitern sollte, ein höheres Ziel in's Auge zu fassen. Wolle Seine Majestät der König Sich nicht mit jenen Bedingungen begnügen, vielmehr die völlige Einverleibung der Herzogthümer durchsetzen, so müsse dies aus der eigenen freien Entschliessung Seiner Majestät hervorgehen.*²⁰ Er halte sich überzeugt, dass keiner der Räthe der Krone eine solche Allerhöchste Entschliessung bedauere, vielmehr jeder freudig bereit sein würde, zu ihrer Durchführung nach Kräften mitzuwirken.

Die meisten der anderen Staatsminister geben ihre volle Zustimmung zu dem, von dem Minister-Präsidenten Sr. Majestät dem Könige ertheilten Rathe zu erkennen. Dabei wurde von mehreren Seiten hervorgehoben, dass die vollständige Annexion der Herzogthümer zwar im beiderseitigen Interesse die beste Lösung, dass sie allein geeignet sein würde, die allgemeinen Wünsche des Landes zu befriedigen, dass aber doch die Erlangung der gestellten Minimalbedingungen genügend sei, um die Interessen Preussens zu wahren, dass von den weiteren Consequenzen

²⁰ The two sentences between the asterisks are printed by Thimme, *loc. cit.* p. 189.

derselben später die völlige Annexion als schliessliches Ergebnis erwartet werden dürfe und dass ein Krieg mit Oesterreich schon deshalb möglichst vermieden werden müsse, weil derselbe zu einer an sich nicht wünschenswerthen Verschiebung der politischen Verhältnisse in Europa, namentlich zu einer Allianz mit Frankreich und Italien führen könnte.

Nur der Minister für die landwirtschaftlichen Angelegenheiten bemerkte, dass es ihm rathsam und empfehlenswerth erschiene, die von allen Seiten für die beste Lösung der Frage erachtete, volle Annexion unumwunden und mit aller Offenheit als das Ziel der Preussischen Politik zu proklamiren, da der Bruch mit Oesterreich auch auf dem anderen vorgeschlagenen Wege nicht zu vermeiden sein werde.

Seine Königliche Hoheit der Kronprinz sprachen sich entschieden gegen die Annexion und für den Versuch aus, die Bewilligung der von Preussen gestellten Minimal-Bedingungen zu erlangen. Hochdieselben bemerkten, dass der Erbprinz von Augustenburg sich diesen Bedingungen — vielleicht mit einigen, wenigbedeutenden Modifikationen — fügen, dass dann auch Oesterreich keinen weiteren Widerstand leisten und dass die auf diese Weise erreichte Bildung eines deutschen Mittelstaates unter Preussischer Oberherrslichkeit Preussen den Weg zu dem Ziele bahnen würde, die Führung Deutschlands in die Hände zu bekommen, wogegen ein Krieg mit Oesterreich und mit den Oesterreich befreundeten süddeutschen Staaten jetzt den Charakter eines deutschen Bürgerkrieges annehmen und von den Feinden deutscher Freiheit und Unabhängigkeit als ein erfreuliches Ereignis begrüsst werden würde.

Der Generalleutnant Freiherr von Moltke sprach sich auf Allerhöchsten Befehl ebenfalls über die gestellte Frage aus und erklärte, dass nach seiner persönlichen Ansicht, von welcher anzunehmen sei, dass sie auch von der Armee getheilt werde, die volle Annexion der Herzogthümer das beste Mittel sein würde, alle berechnete Interessen zu befriedigen und dass zur Erreichung dieses Zieles Preussen auch einen Krieg gegen Oesterreich nicht zu scheuen haben würde.

Der Minister-Präsident ergriff schliesslich noch einmal das Wort. Er machte einerseits auf die Winkelzüge und Vorbehalte, die der Erbprinz von Augustenburg bisher den Preussischen Forderungen entgegengesetzt habe, andererseits auf die Unwahrscheinlichkeit aufmerksam, dass das Beispiel eines unter Preussischer Oberherrslichkeit durch einen eigenen Fürsten regirten deutschen Mittelstaates Nachahmung finden und zu freiwilliger Unterwerfung anderer deutscher Klein- oder Mittelstaaten unter die Preussische Oberherrslichkeit führen werde. Er bezeichnete sodann *das* als den eigentlichen Gegenstand der jetzt zu entscheidenden Frage, ob Preussen die Annexion — die es bis jetzt nicht verlangt, aber auch nicht als mögliche Eventualität ausgeschlossen habe — ganz aus seinem Programm streichen und definitiv fallen lassen wolle und solle oder nicht? Das Festhalten an der Forderung des Fahnenreides und die Verschmelzung der Schleswig-Holsteinischen Truppen mit der Preussischen Armee sei gleichbedeutend mit der Forderung der Annexion. *Wolle man an diesen Forderungen festhalten, so sei es am rathsamsten,

jetzt von weiteren Verhandlungen Abstand zu nehmen, vorläufig von ferneren Versuchen der Verständigung mit Oesterreich abzulassen und die weitere Entwicklung der Ereignisse stillschweigend abzuwarten.*²¹ Sollte dieselbe zu einem Kriege mit Oesterreich führen, so würde dann als Preis eines solchen Krieges, der nicht wohl als deutscher Bürgerkrieg zu charakterisiren sein möchte, nicht bloss die Einverleibung von Schleswig und Holstein in die Preussische Monarchie, sondern die Herbeiführung eines staatsrechtlichen Verhältnisses der deutschen Mittel- und Kleinstaaten zu Preussen, wie solches Seine Königliche Hoheit der Kronprinz als wünschenswerth bezeichnet habe, ins Auge zu fassen sein.

Des Königs Majestät behielten Sich Allerhöchstihre Entscheidung vor.

Die Berathung wurde hiermit geschlossen und ist das Protokoll in gewöhnlicher Weise vollzogen worden.

(gez.) v. Bismarck, v. Bodelschwingh, v. Roon, Grf. v. Itzenplitz, v. Mühlner, Grf. zur Lippe, v. Selchow, Grf. zu Eulenburg

Allerhöchst
Eigenhändig:

Genehmigt.
Wilhelm.

No. 9

BLOME TO MENS DORFF, Gastein, August 14, 1865, No. 2

Despatch. Original²²

[*Haus-, Hof-, und Staatsarchiv, Vienna: P A. III. 90*]

Mit der heute unterzeichneten Vereinbarung wegen Theilung des Condominiums in den Herzogthümern tritt die schleswig-holsteinische Frage in eine neue Phase. Will man sich daher von der veränderten Sachlage Rechenschaft ablegen und es versuchen die weiteren Folgen des nunmehr eintretenden Zustandes zu übersehen, so erscheint es unerlässlich sich auch den bisherigen Gang der Dinge zu vergegenwärtigen und in Kürze die Momente zu recapituliren, welche die Krisis, und diejenigen, welche gerade die jetzt vorliegende Lösung derselben herbeigeführt haben.

Als Euer Excellenz mich im Laufe des Monates März d. J. nach Wien beschieden, um an Berathungen über die Angelegenheit der Herzogthümer Theil zu nehmen, waren kurz zuvor die preussischen Februarforderungen von der kaiserl. Regierung abgelehnt worden und es fehlte jede Aussicht, eine Verständigung über die definitive Gestaltung der von Dänemark getrennten Länder zu erzielen. Wir mussten vielmehr der Überzeugung Raum geben, dass Preussen die möglichste Verlängerung

²¹ The sentence between the asterisks is printed by Thimme, *loc. cit.* p. 190.

²² Unpublished. Excerpts printed in Wertheimer: *Bismarck im politischen Kampf* pp. 163-167. For the political situation at this time, see chapters vii and viii above.

des Provisoriums anstrebe, um dadurch eine den österreichischen und den deutschen Interessen entgegengesetzte Lösung allmählig vorzubereiten. Es wurde deshalb beschlossen einerseits das Drängen Sachsens und Baierns am Bunde zu unterstützen, andererseits das Condominium in einer Weise zu führen, dass Preussen seinen Vortheil nicht mehr in einer Verzögerung der Entscheidung finden könne. Dieses Programm ist vollständig erfüllt worden. Der Bundesbeschluss vom 6ten April trennte officiell den österreichischen vom preussischen Standpunkte und übte zum Nachtheile des letzteren einen moralischen Druck aus, der in Berlin nur zu sehr empfunden wurde. Die Verhältnisse in den Herzogthümern nahmen durch die selbstständige Haltung des österreichischen Commissärs einen Charakter an, der die Fortdauer der Provisorischen Regierung unter solchen Umständen für Preussen unerträglich machte. Aber war damit auch der von uns angestrebte Zweck erreicht worden? Ich glaube nein. Wir hatten über das Ziel hinausgegriffen. Unsere Absicht war gewesen Preussen zur Annahme einer verständigen und billigen Lösung zu bewegen. Die angewendeten Mittel hatten aber die entgegengesetzte Wirkung gehabt, das Ehrgefühl, die Eigenwilligkeit, die Selbstgefälligkeit Preussens herauszufordern. Für Preussen war allerdings das Provisorium unleidlich, aber auch die Einwilligung in ein unseren Wünschen entsprechendes Definitivum ohne arge Demüthigung unmöglich geworden. Die Beziehungen hatten sich derartig zugespitzt, dass Preussen, wenigstens nach der in Berlin herrschenden Auffassung, nur mehr die Wahl hatte zwischen einem schmachvollen Rückzuge und einer eigenmächtigen Durchsetzung seiner Ansprüche. Der Rückzug wäre gleichzeitig eine Niederlage nach Innen für die augenblicklich am Ruder befindliche conservative Partei gewesen. Der Sieg war nicht ohne Kampf zu erreichen und ein Mann von Herrn von Bismarck's Charakter scheut den Kampf, selbst den ungleichen, nicht. Er hatte ihn vielmehr schon vorbereitet. Da ihm jedes Mittel zur Erreichung seines Zweckes anwendbar erscheint, hatte er auch keinen Skrupel nach Bundesgenossen in einem Lager zu suchen, welches gegenwärtig den Hauptsitz der europäischen Revolution bildet. Der Bruch stand unmittelbar bevor. Musste Oesterreich davor zurückschrecken? Keineswegs. Der Bruch hätte vielleicht nur zu einem neuen Olmütz geführt und entspann sich daraus wirklich der Krieg, so lagen die Chancen immerhin so günstig, dass die Wahrscheinlichkeits-Berechnung keinen unglücklichen Ausgang ergab. Aber wenn Oesterreich auch den Bruch nicht zu fürchten hatte, konnte es denselben wünschen? Konnte es denselben selbst eintreten lassen, ohne wenigstens einen letzten Versuch zur Verständigung zu machen? Fiel auch die Verantwortung eine europäische Krisis heraufbeschworen zu haben auf den Gegner, so musste doch erwogen werden, dass die inneren Zustände der Monarchie dringend die Erhaltung des Friedens erheischten, dass duobus litigantibus tertius gaudet nämlich Frankreich sicherlich aus einem Kampfe zwischen Oesterreich und Preussen den grössten Gewinn gezogen hätte, und endlich dass es dem Gefühle widerstrebt nach einem gemeinsam geführten glücklichen Kriege die Waffen sofort wider einander zu kehren, gleich

Raubvögeln, welche um die Beute streiten. Ein neues Olmütz könnte angesichts der heutigen Weltlage ebenfalls nur als problematischer Gewinn betrachtet werden. Es würde das jetzige preussische Ministerium stürzen und muthmasslich eine abermalige "neue Aera" hervorrufen mit allen jenen kleindeutschen Tendenzen, welche uns weit nachtheiliger sind, als Herrn von Bismarck's unpopuläres Regiment. Jedenfalls aber würde die Erbitterung gegen Oesterreich in Preussen ungemein wachsen und das Berliner Cabinet bei jeder auftauchenden europäischen Complication eo ipso in die Reihen unserer Feinde drängen.

Se. Majestät der Kaiser wollte es auf alle diese Eventualitäten nur dann ankommen lassen, wenn keine für Oesterreich ehrenvolle Beilegung des Conflictes mehr erzielt werden konnte. Da fügte es sich, dass preussischer Seits der Wunsch geäussert wurde einen Vertreter der kais. Regierung am Hoflager von Gastein zu sehen, um während der Reise des Königs den Faden persönlicher Verhandlung mit Herrn von Bismarck nicht gänzlich abreissen zu lassen. Ich wurde für diese Mission ausersehen und begab mich am 26ten Juli nach Gastein mit dem Auftrage genau zu ermitteln, ob Preussen, wie es den Anschein hatte, wirklich zum Aeussersten entschlossen sei oder ob sich die Möglichkeit herausstelle, Bürgschaften für eine bundesgemässe Regelung der streitigen Angelegenheit zu erreichen.

Meine in Folge dessen durch vier Tage geführten Verhandlungen ergaben bis zur Evidenz, dass es Preussen mit der vorgeschobenen Candidatur des Grossherzogs von Oldenburg nicht sehr Ernst war, dass es allerdings nicht in erster Linie die Annexion der Herzogthümer erstrebe, wohl aber noch immer an Forderungen festhalte, welche mit der Constituirung eines souveränen Staates unvereinbar sind.*²⁸ Der König und sein Minister verweigerten jedwede, selbst die in der am wenigsten bindenden Form gekleidete Zusage hinsichtlich des Definitivums, sie bestanden peremptorisch auf die Entfernung des Prinzen von Augustenburg aus Holstein und auf Wiederanwendung der früheren dänischen Verordnungen über Presse und Vereinswesen, mit Einem Worte sie verlangten Beseitigung dessen, was Preussen im Wege stand und von uns gerade deshalb geschützt wurde, um ein schnelleres Ende des Provisoriums herbeizuführen. Auf dieser Basis war eine Verständigung unmöglich. Ohne eines günstigen Definitivums sicher zu sein, konnten wir unsere Waffen im Provisorium nicht preisgeben; bevor letzteres nicht geschehen, wollte Preussen über keine definitive Gestaltung der Dinge unterhandeln. Vom Bismarck'schen Standpunkte sah Preussen sich zu eigenmächtigen Gewaltschritten veranlasst, welche der Mitbesitzer in den Herzogthümern sich nicht gefallen lassen konnte. Als nächste Massregel dieser Gattung stand die Aufhebung des als preussischen Unterthan angesehenen Prinzen von Augustenburg bevor. Gegen die ungesetzliche Arrestation des Zeitungsredakteurs May hatten wir protestirt. Sollte nun ein zweiter

²⁸ The section following the asterisk is partly quoted and partly summarized by Wertheimer pp. 163-167.

ohnmächtiger Protest folgen? Mit Oesterreichs Würde war das kaum vereinbar. Oder, wie von Einigen vorgeschlagen worden, war es rathsam den preussischen Drohungen gegenüber uns auf Frankfurt zurückzuziehen? Den Bund zu Hilfe zu rufen hatte nur eine Bedeutung, wenn wir den Krieg wirklich wollten. War die Anrufung des Bundes nur ein maskirter Rückzug, dann constatirte sie eben Oesterreichs und des Bundes Schwäche, sie schadete beiden, anstatt dem Einen zu helfen. Denn das stand fest und war auch anderweitig als durch meine hiesigen Wahrnehmungen zur Gewissheit geworden—Herr von Bismarck war auf den Bruch gefasst und es hiesse wahrlich seinen Charakter gänzlich verkennen, wollte man voraussetzen, ein Bundesbeschluss werde ihm imponiren. Andererseits besitzt Herr von Bismarck so sehr das Vertrauen seines königlichen Herrn, dass für jetzt nicht daran gedacht werden kann, seinen massgebenden Einfluss auf die Entschlüsse des Königs zu bekämpfen.

Also, um die Situation noch einmal in wenig Worten zusammenzufassen, das bisherige Provisorium war unhaltbar geworden, ein Definitivum, wie es unseren Interessen angemessen gewesen wäre, nicht durchzusetzen.

Da kam ich auf den Gedanken eine ganz neue Lösung vorzuschlagen. Ich proponirte dieselbe hier *sub spe rati* und es gelang mir, namentlich durch die Unterstützung des General-Lts. von Manteuffel, meinem Projekte nach manchen Einwürfen und Bedenken Geltung zu verschaffen.

Die ideelle Theilung der im Wiener Frieden erworbenen Rechte sollte in eine reelle aufgelöst werden, Oesterreich Holstein, Preussen Schleswig erhalten. Damit glaubte ich eine politisch sehr glückliche Combination gefunden zu haben. Mit dem Besitze von Schleswig bekam Preussen eine exponirte Position ausserhalb Deutschlands, ein Land mit vorwiegend dänisch gesinnter Bevölkerung, welches durch bedeutende fortificatorische Anlagen in Vertheidigungszustand zu setzen war und dennoch gegen die Eifersucht der maritimen Mächte und die Bestrebungen der Revolution nur durch eine Oesterreich geneigte Politik für Preussen erhaltbar schien. Das Bundesland Holstein hingegen blieb ein selbstständiger Staat, befreit von allen Zumuthungen, welche den Hauptanstoß in den Februarforderungen bildeten. Oesterreich setzte zur Befriedigung des Bundes denjenigen Prätendenten daselbst als Herzog ein, welcher die meisten Stimmen und die grösste Popularität auf seine Person vereinigte, und es zog sich ehrenvoll, im Frieden mit Preussen und zugleich mit den Mittelstaaten, aus einer sehr verwickelten Lage zurück. In der Folge wurde Preussen entweder veranlasst dem Drängen Europa's und Deutschlands nachzugeben und auch Schleswig dem Herzoge von Holstein zu überlassen oder es blieb in einer misslichen Situation, mehr denn je auf Oesterreichs Wohlwollen angewiesen. Suchte es aber dann noch Holsteins staatliche Selbstständigkeit zu gefährden, so befand sich Oesterreich in der günstigen Lage, zum Einschreiten mit dem Bunde berechtigt, nicht aber mehr durch die Gebote der Ehre verpflichtet zu sein.

Die Dinge standen in der That so, dass nur mehr die Alternative des Bruches und dieses Ausweges übrig blieb. Ich hatte die Ehre meine

Idee vor Sr. Majestät dem Kaiser, dann vor Euer Excellenz zu entwickeln, und Se. Majestät entschied für Vermeidung des Bruches.

Ich erhielt nun Instructionen, um mich zum zweiten Male nach Gastein zu verfügen und auf der angegebenen Basis zu unterhandeln. Mein Plan erlitt jedoch in Wien eine wesentliche Modification. Anstatt einer definitiven Auftheilung ward beschlossen der Theilung den Charakter des Provisoriums zu wahren. Ich verkenne das Gewicht der Gründe nicht, welche einer blossen Umgestaltung des Provisoriums das Wort reden, allein ebenso wenig kann ich verhehlen, dass mein ursprüngliches Projekt mir den Vorzug zu verdienen scheint. Hätte ich nach Beweisen für die Richtigkeit meiner Auffassung gesucht, so würde ich keinen der schwächsten in der Leichtigkeit gefunden haben, mit welcher Herr von Bismarck auf diese Wendung einging. Der eingeschaltete Satz "bis auf weitere Vereinbarung" beraubt Se. Majestät den Kaiser des Rechtes unverweilt selbstständig über Seinen Antheil zu verfügen, und Preussen hat uns in Holstein lieber als den Augustenburger zu Nachbarn. Jetzt können wir uns noch nicht zurückziehen, nicht unseren Frieden mit dem Bunde schliessen, ja wir sind vielleicht mehr als es gut ist an die preussische Politik gebunden. Allerdings, wenn es in unserer Absicht läge, uns die Möglichkeit des Konfliktes mit Preussen zu retten, so bietet das Provisorium dazu bessere Anhaltspunkte, als mein Vorschlag für das Definitivum. So lange österreichische Truppen im Norden stehen, ist Oesterreichs Ehre an der Lösung der Herzogthümerfrage in hervorragendem Masse betheiligt. Das ist die Gefahr, die ich erblicke. Sie kann aber auch vermindert werden und es ist vor Allem angezeigt, jetzt sorgfältig zu erwägen, wie die neugeschaffene Situation bestmöglichst für die Interessen des Kaiserstaates zu verwerthen wäre. Ich halte mich sicherlich nicht für berufen in dieser Beziehung Vorschläge zu machen, aber ich bin überzeugt, dass die wohlwollende Nachsicht Euer Excellenz mir auch hierüber die Aeussierung unmassgeblicher Ansichten gestatten wird, weil meine Gedanken sich ja naturgemäss in letzter Zeit ganz besonders mit den Consequenzen eines Actes beschäftigen mussten, für welchen ich einen Theil der Verantwortung trage.

Ich constatire zunächst, meiner innigsten Überzeugung entsprechend, dass Herr von Bismarck durchaus nicht jener grundsätzliche Gegner Oesterreichs ist, für welchen man ihn vielfach hält. Allerdings hat er die Depesche vom 24. Jänner geschrieben, in welcher von Verlegung des Schwerpunktes der österreichischen Monarchie nach Pesth-Ofen die Rede ist. Allein Herr von Bismarck hat im Laufe seiner politischen Laufbahn ebenso viele Aeussierungen für als gegen die österreichische Allianz fallen lassen und er gehörte seiner Zeit zu den Wenigen, welche im Gegensatze zur Radowitz'schen Richtung den Tag von Olmütz gut hiessen und öffentlich vertraten. Die Wahrheit ist, dass Herr von Bismarck sich ausschliesslich durch Gründe der inneren Politik bestimmen lässt. Herr von Bismarck ist kein Staatsmann, er ist ein Parteimann. Kann er die Demokratie Preussens nach seiner Manier bewältigen ohne sich in Deutschland auf Kosten der Mittelstaaten auszubreiten, so denkt er

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Die ideelle Theilung der im Wiener Frieden erworbenen Rechte sollte in eine reelle aufgelöst werden, Oesterreich Holstein, Preussen Schleswig erhalten. Damit glaubte ich eine politisch sehr glückliche Combination gefunden zu haben. Mit dem Besitze von Schleswig bekam Preussen eine exponirte Position ausserhalb Deutschlands, ein Land mit vorwiegend dänisch gesinnter Bevölkerung, welches durch bedeutende fortificatorische Anlagen in Vertheidigungszustand zu setzen war und dennoch gegen die Eifersucht der maritimen Mächte und die Bestrebungen der Revolution nur durch eine Oesterreich geneigte Politik für Preussen erhaltbar schien. Das Bundesland Holstein hingegen blieb ein selbstständiger Staat, befreit von allen Zumuthungen, welche den Hauptanstoß in den Februarforderungen bildeten. Oesterreich setzte zur Befriedigung des Bundes denjenigen Prätendenten daselbst als Herzog ein, welcher die meisten Stimmen und die grösste Popularität auf seine Person vereinigte, und es zog sich ehrenvoll, im Frieden mit Preussen und zugleich mit den Mittelstaaten, aus einer sehr verwickelten Lage zurück. In der Folge wurde Preussen entweder veranlasst dem Drängen Europa's und Deutschlands nachzugeben und auch Schleswig dem Herzoge von Holstein zu überlassen oder es blieb in einer misslichen Situation, mehr denn je auf Oesterreichs Wohlwollen angewiesen. Suchte es aber dann noch Holsteins staatliche Selbstständigkeit zu gefährden, so befand sich Oesterreich in der günstigen Lage, zum Einschreiten mit dem Bunde berechtigt, nicht aber mehr durch die Gebote der Ehre verpflichtet zu sein.

Die Dinge standen in der That so, dass nur mehr die Alternative des Bruches und dieses Ausweges übrig blieb. Ich hatte die Ehre meine

Idee vor Sr. Majestät dem Kaiser, dann vor Euer Excellenz zu entwickeln, und Se. Majestät entschied für Vermeidung des Bruches.

Ich erhielt nun Instructionen, um mich zum zweiten Male nach Gastein zu verfügen und auf der angegebenen Basis zu unterhandeln. Mein Plan erlitt jedoch in Wien eine wesentliche Modification. Anstatt einer definitiven Auftheilung ward beschlossen der Theilung den Charakter des Provisoriums zu wahren. Ich verkenne das Gewicht der Gründe nicht, welche einer blossen Umgestaltung des Provisoriums das Wort reden, allein ebenso wenig kann ich verhehlen, dass mein ursprüngliches Projekt mir den Vorzug zu verdienen scheint. Hätte ich nach Beweisen für die Richtigkeit meiner Auffassung gesucht, so würde ich keinen der schwächsten in der Leichtigkeit gefunden haben, mit welcher Herr von Bismarck auf diese Wendung einging. Der eingeschaltete Satz "bis auf weitere Vereinbarung" beraubt Se. Majestät den Kaiser des Rechtes unverweilt selbstständig über Seinen Antheil zu verfügen, und Preussen hat uns in Holstein lieber als den Augustenburger zu Nachbarn. Jetzt können wir uns noch nicht zurückziehen, nicht unseren Frieden mit dem Bunde schliessen, ja wir sind vielleicht mehr als es gut ist an die preussische Politik gebunden. Allerdings, wenn es in unserer Absicht läge, uns die Möglichkeit des Konfliktes mit Preussen zu retten, so bietet das Provisorium dazu bessere Anhaltspunkte, als mein Vorschlag für das Definitivum. So lange österreichische Truppen im Norden stehen, ist Oesterreichs Ehre an der Lösung der Herzogthümerfrage in hervorragendem Masse theilhaftig. Das ist die Gefahr, die ich erblicke. Sie kann aber auch vermindert werden und es ist vor Allem angezeigt, jetzt sorgfältig zu erwägen, wie die neugeschaffene Situation bestmöglichst für die Interessen des Kaiserstaates zu verwerthen wäre. Ich halte mich sicherlich nicht für berufen in dieser Beziehung Vorschläge zu machen, aber ich bin überzeugt, dass die wohlwollende Nachsicht Euer Excellenz mir auch hierüber die Aeussierung unmassgeblicher Ansichten gestatten wird, weil meine Gedanken sich ja naturgemäss in letzter Zeit ganz besonders mit den Consequenzen eines Actes beschäftigen mussten, für welchen ich einen Theil der Verantwortung trage.

Ich constatire zunächst, meiner innigsten Überzeugung entsprechend, dass Herr von Bismarck durchaus nicht jener grundsätzliche Gegner Oesterreichs ist, für welchen man ihn vielfach hält. Allerdings hat er die Depesche vom 24. Jänner geschrieben, in welcher von Verlegung des Schwerpunktes der österreichischen Monarchie nach Pesth-Ofen die Rede ist. Allein Herr von Bismarck hat im Laufe seiner politischen Laufbahn ebenso viele Aeussierungen für als gegen die österreichische Allianz fallen lassen und er gehörte seiner Zeit zu den Wenigen, welche im Gegensatze zur Radowitz'schen Richtung den Tag von Olmütz gut hiessen und öffentlich vertraten. Die Wahrheit ist, dass Herr von Bismarck sich ausschliesslich durch Gründe der inneren Politik bestimmen lässt. Herr von Bismarck ist kein Staatsmann, er ist ein Parteimann. Kann er die Demokratie Preussens nach seiner Manier bewältigen ohne sich in Deutschland auf Kosten der Mittelstaaten auszubreiten, so denkt er

nicht an Machterweiterung. Gebraucht er letztere um sein System im Innern zu stützen, so wird er sie rücksichtslos anstreben. Der König und seine nächste Umgebung sind sogar principiell für das Bündniß mit Oesterreich. In den Augen des Generals von Manteuffel gilt es die Revolution zu besiegen, welche er in den Mittelstaaten bereits triumphiren zu sehen glaubt.*²⁴ Oesterreich und Preussen (?) sind, nach dieser Auffassungsweise, die einzigen conservativen Mächte. Alles was in Deutschland aus der Napoleonischen Zeit stammt, mithin auch die Souveränität der Mittelstaaten, ist vom Uebel und soll-gemeinsam von beiden Mächten unterdrückt werden, als vorspiel des grossen Entscheidungskampfes, der einmal gegen das bonapartistische Frankreich zu kämpfen ist. Diese Richtung bewegt sich in Idealen und führt ad absurdum, weil die Vernichtung der jetzt doch ganz legitimen deutschen Souveränitäten ein Act der Revolution wäre und in letzter Analyse auch letzterer zu Statten käme. Die kais. Regierung kann dieser Tendenz nicht folgen, aber sie kann mit den Vertretern derselben, solange nichts unternommen wird um die Theorie in Praxis zu verwandeln, in Frieden leben. Systematisch feindlich gegen Oesterreich sind in Preussen nur die Königin und ihr Anhang, die liberale Partei und—so höre ich sagen—bis jetzt wenigstens das kronprinzliche Paar. Für den gegenwärtigen Augenblick also ist es recht wohl möglich den Bruch mit Preussen zu vermeiden, denn auch Herrn von Bismarck wäre ein solcher zur Durchführung seiner Parteimassregeln jetzt wenig erwünscht. Er müsste ihn nur dann herbeiführen, wenn die Einsetzung des Prinzen von Augustenburg ihm aufgedrungen werden sollte, denn in diesem Falle bedeutete seine Nachgiebigkeit auch eine beträchtliche Schwächung seiner antidemocratischen Position und die österreichische Allianz ist ihm nur insolange von Werth, als sie ihn in seiner inneren Politik nicht stört.

Hier kann mir entgegnet werden, dass demnach auf die Länge mit Herrn von Bismarck's Regiment kein Friede denkbar sei, weil die inneren Schwierigkeiten demselben stets die Erreichung von Erfolgen nach Ausen mit zwingender Nothwendigkeit auferlegen werden. Möglich. Aber für jetzt, für die nächste Zeit erscheint mir die Erhaltung freundschaftlicher Beziehungen keineswegs unvereinbar mit den österreichischen Interessen. Darüber besteht kein Zweifel, dass die preussische Regierung gegenwärtig nicht im Entferntesten daran denkt, den Prinzen von Augustenburg jemals als Herzog von Schleswig-Holstein anzuerkennen. Für sie ist das neue Provisorium nur eine Etappe zur Annexion. Die Folge wird lehren, ob die Rechnung richtig ist.

Wir unsererseits können dagegen recht laut sagen, dass wir stets bereit sind, die so vielfach gewünschte Lösung eintreten zu lassen. Zu dem Ende wird von der hier abgeschlossenen Übereinkunft, sei es textuell, sei es ihrem wesentlichen Inhalte nach, den deutschen Regierungen Mittheilung zu machen sein und zwar mit dem Beifügen, dass diese Theilung des Condominiums erforderlich gewesen sei, um Deutschland vor einem Bürgerkriege zu bewahren, bei welchem der Weltfriede und auch die

* Wertheimer's excerpts end here.

Selbstständigkeit der Mittelstaaten auf dem Spiele gestanden wären. Die Theilung sei indessen nur eine provisorische, man müsse von der Macht der Umstände und einer ruhigeren Würdigung der Sachlage erwarten, dass Preussen später zur Einwilligung in eine definitive Entscheidung der Streitfrage, wie sie den Wünschen Oesterreichs und des Bundes entspreche, bewogen werde.

Auf die kürzlich von Sachsen und Baiern in Frankfurt gestellte Anfrage werden wohl Oesterreich und Preussen gemeinschaftlich am Bunde erklären, dass angesichts der jetzt nothwendig gewordenen Modification der Verwaltung in den Herzogthümern, selbstverständlich die Berufung der Stände vor der Hand nicht stattfinden könne. Spätere ähnliche Anfragen und Anträge einiger der Mittelstaaten sind vollkommen ungefährlich, sobald wir sie nicht zur Annahme empfehlen. Ohne unsere Empfehlung erhalten sie schwerlich je eine Majorität. Wir können gewähren lassen, wir sollten nicht abrathen, aber auch nicht aufmuntern. Eine solche ruhige, wohlwollende Haltung kann weder in Berlin noch an den deutschen Höfen einen ungünstigen Eindruck machen. Oesterreich steht fest auf seinem Standpunkte, aber es hält den Moment nicht für eingetreten, denselben activ zur Geltung zu bringen. Oesterreich ist der populären Lösung nicht entgegen; aber es will nicht auf die Entschlüsse Preussens durch eine nur zu noch grösserem Widerstande reizende Presion wirken; das ganze Odium fällt auf Preussen.

Dem Prinzen von Augustenburg wäre zu rathen sich vor Allem wieder die Gunst des Königs Wilhelm zu erwerben, ohne dessen Zustimmung volle Berücksichtigung seiner Ansprüche nun einmal nicht zu bewerkstelligen sei.

In Holstein sollte eine feste, sich über das Parteigetriebe stellende Regierung eingesetzt werden, welche sich gleich weit von den preussischen Gewaltmassregeln und der Schwäche popularitätssüchtiger Administrationen entfernt hielte. Ihr Programm müsste sein, gewissenhafte Anwendung der bestehenden Gesetze, möglichste Entwicklung der materiellen Wohlfahrt, Vermeidung kleinlicher Polizeiverfügungen, thunlichste Selbstverwaltung des Landes. Bei dem besonnenen Charakter und gesetzlichen Sinne der Holsteinischen Bevölkerung sind wohl keine Unruhen zu befürchten. Sie zu verhüten genügt auch schon der Hinweis auf die Folgen, welche eintreten würden, wenn Oesterreich seine Rechte gänzlich an Preussen cediren wollte. Der Gebrauch der schleswig-holsteinischen Landesfarben dürfte zu gestatten sein. Gegen Presse und Vereine wäre nur dann einzuschreiten, wenn deren Verhalten das Mass einer ungefährlichen Opposition überschritte. Ob der Sitz der neuen Landesregierung nicht zweckmässiger von Kiel nach Altona oder Ploen zu verlegen ist, bleibt zu erwägen. Kiel ist der Focus jeder nationalen und revolutionären Agitation in Holstein.

Gelingt es auf diesem Wege auch nur das nächste Frühjahr ohne weitere Verwicklung zu erreichen, so ist schon viel, sehr viel gewonnen. Dann wird es von der allgemeinen Weltlage, von den inneren Zuständen der Monarchie, von der Stimmung in den Herzogthümern, von der Stim-

mung in Deutschland abhängen, welche weitere Politik einzuschlagen ist. Vielleicht ist alsdann ein längeres Temporisiren noch angezeigt, vielleicht empfiehlt es sich den Bruch mit Preussen herbeizuführen; vielleicht ist Preussen selber genöthigt eine Lösung im nationalen Sinne zuzugeben; vielleicht erlauben die veränderten Umstände und die Richtung der öffentlichen Meinung eine ganz andere Entscheidung im Vereine mit Preussen zu treffen.

Einstweilen ist kein Princip, kein Recht aufgegeben. Die Lösung ist nur vertagt und sie musste vertagt werden, weil sie gegenwärtig nicht zu erzielen war, ohne einen Weltbrand zu entzünden oder eine schimpfliche Nachgiebigkeit des Einen der beiden streitenden Mitbesitzer zu veranlassen.

No. 10

AUSTRIAN COUNCIL OF MINISTERS, Vienna, September 19, 1865

Protocol ²⁵

[*Haus-, Hof-, und Staatsarchiv*, Vienna: *Kabinettskanzlei*, K.Z. 4019, M.R.Z. 40]

[Vorsitzender: Seine Majestät der Kaiser,

Gegenwärtige: Der Staatsminister Graf Belcredi,
 Der Minister Graf Esterházy,
 Der Kriegsminister F. M. Lt. Ritter von Franck,
 Der ungarische Hofkanzler v. Majláth,
 Der Finanzminister Graf Larisch,
 Der Justizminister Ritter v. Komers,
 Der kroatisch-slav[onische] Hofkanzler v. Mazuranič,
 Der Leiter der siebenb[ürgische] Hofkanzlei G[ener]al Graf Haller,

Abwesend: Der Minister des Aeussern Graf Mensdorff.

Gegenstände der Berathung: (Four matters of internal policy, followed by:)

5. Diplomatische Schritte wegen Zusammenkunft des 36er Ausschusses in Frankfurt und wegen Feindseligkeit der Presse in einigen Theilen Deutschlands anbelangend die Gasteiner Convention.]

5

Se. Majestät eröffnete ferner noch der Versammlung, Graf Esterhazy habe ihm die Mittheilung gemacht, es sei von dem preussischen Gesand-

²⁵ Unpublished. This is an important source for the origin of the Frankfurt Affair of October 1865.

ten die offiziöse Anfrage gestellt worden, ob nicht wegen der nach Frankfurt a/M. *ausgeschriebenen Zusammenkunft des s[o]g[enannten] 36er Ausschusses* und der von Seite einiger öffentlichen Blätter wegen der Gasteiner Convention zu Tage tretender Feindseligkeit gemeinsame diplomatische Schritte angezeigt wären.

Was den 36er Ausschuss betrifft, so könne, bemerkte namentlich der *Staatsminister*, über seinen revolutionären Charakter kein Zweifel bestehen, eine diplomatische Verwendung bei dem Senate in *Frankfurt* gegen dessen Zusammentritt dürfte daher ganz angezeigt sein.

Man einigte sich hierauf dahin, es möge auf die offiziöse Anfrage des preussischen Gesandten demselben eröffnet werden, dass man sich hierseits zu einem gemeinsamen diplomatischen Schritte bei dem Senate in Frankfurt bereit erkläre, womit derselbe auf das Gefährliche des Zusammentritts einer illegalen Versammlung aufmerksam gemacht werden soll und ihm zu verdeuten wäre, dass wenn der Ausschuss eine gefährliche Haltung annehmen sollte, die beiden Mächte, welchen die Aufrechterhaltung von Ruhe und Ordnung am Sitze der Bundesregierung obliegt, sich veranlasst sehen dürften, die Sache in eigene Hand zu nehmen.

Anbelangend die Schritte wegen der Pressauslassungen, so war man über die Fruchtlosigkeit von solchen allgemein einverstanden, erklärt sich jedoch nicht dagegen, dass namentlich wegen der beleidigenden Haltung der Constitutionellen Zeitung in Dresden bei der l[etzteren] Regierung im diplomatischen Wege Beschwerde geführt werde.

No. 11

EDWIN VON MANTEUFFEL TO BISMARCK, Schloss Gottorf,
October 11, 1865, *Vertraulich*

Despatch. Original²⁶

[*Hauptarchiv des Auswärtigen Amtes*, Berlin: No. A 3122]²⁷

[MANTEUFFEL, the governor of Schleswig, informs Bismarck that immediately after he had finished his report of the day before yesterday, he was visited by the Austrian civil commissioner for Holstein, Hofrat von Hofmann, with whom he had a long conversation.]²⁸

. . . Der Hofrath von Hoffmann [sic] sprach dann ausführlich mit mir in demselben Sinne wie er es am 4ten October mit Baron Zedlitz gethan,

²⁶ Unpublished. Very briefly and incompletely summarized in Sybel IV, p. 173.

²⁷ The archive authorities requested the writer not to cite the specific folio from which this document is taken.

²⁸ See chapter ix above. In a private letter to Herr von Thile, October 14, Manteuffel remarks in reference to this conversation with Hofmann, that "in allen Feldzügen die Oestreicher ihren Rückzug mit einer ungeheuren Angriffs Demonstration beginnen." (PGS) — According to a notation of Bismarck's, this despatch was shown to the King.

über die Nothwendigkeit in der sich Baron Gablenz und er sich befänden, Augustenburgische Beamte anzustellen. Er motivirte dies in nachstehender Art. Der Kaiser fasse Holstein als ein Pfand seiner Rechte an den Herzogthümern auf und die Statthalterei habe die Pflicht dem Kaiser sein Pfand intact zu bewahren. Würden Annectionisten angestellt, so sei in Kurzem die ganze Meinung in Holstein für Preussischen Anschluss, sei dies geschehen, so sei das Pfand in seinem Werthe gemindert, ergo müsste die Statthalterei durch das Gegengewicht der Augustenburgischen Beamten den status quo in der öffentlichen Meinung in Holstein erhalten. Diese Auseinandersetzung hat Herr von Hoffmann nicht nur dem Baron Zedlitz und mir, sondern auch an Baron Scheel-Plessen, an Graf Reventlow-Farve und an mehrere Herren der Holsteinischen Ritterschaft gemacht.

In diesem widerholten Aussprechen liegt unstreitig eine Absicht. Sie kann nur darin liegen, Preussen die Überzeugung geben zu wollen, dass in den Augustenburgischen Anstellungen nichts feindseliges gegen Preussen liegt, oder aber durch diesen offenen Ausspruch die Augustenburgische Agitation zu unterstützen, und so jedem Preussisch gesinnten Holsteiner die Aussicht auf eine Anstellung abzuschneiden. Das Erstere wird man nicht erreichen, denn die Sache hat ihre sehr principielle Bedeutung und dies um so mehr, als man in Wien diese ganz genau kennt. . . .

Hofrath von Hoffmann sprach dann am Montage auch über die ganze politische Situation. Er meint, dass es dringend wünschenswerth sei, wenn die Herzogthümerfrage bald gelöst werde; die einzig richtige Lösung sei, dass sie beide in Preussen incorporirt würden. Damit sei Österreich einverstanden, könne aber ohne Compensation von Land und Leuten seine Zustimmung nicht geben. Einmal weil Preussen reell gestärkt werde durch diesen Zuwachs, dann weil der moralische Erfolg für Preussen in Deutschland noch grösser wäre als der reelle Zuwachs seiner Macht, dann weil der Kaiser seine inneren Verhältnisse nicht würde ordnen können, wenn Oesterreich keinen Landeszuwachs erhielte in Folge des Blutes, das seine Soldaten hier vergossen — die öffentliche Meinung würde es nicht verstehen, wenn dieses allein für die Vergrößerung Preussens und für Geld das Oesterreich erhielte, geflossen sei —, endlich aber weil der Kaiser die Lombardei verloren und es ihm persönlich eine Art Ehrensache sei, seinem Reiche nun auch wieder einen Länderzuwachs zu verschaffen. Auf meine Aufforderung doch einmal zu sagen, was er sich als Compensation dächte, so meinte Herr von Hoffmann, dass er nicht hoch genug stehe, um hierüber zu sprechen, dass wenn ich aber seine Meinung wissen wolle, so gehe sie dahin, dass wenn Preussen durch einen Krieg in dem es mehr Opfer gebracht als Oesterreich eine Million Menschen gewänne, Oesterreich doch wenigstens einen Zuwachs von 250 000 Menschen haben müsse. Allerdings habe Preussen auf die Hälfte der Million schon ein eigenes Recht, aber das ändere nichts; das Resultat wäre und bliebe immer der Zuwachs von einer Million. Dann glaube er, dass Oesterreich sehr grossen Werth darauf lege, das Ulmer Lager zu bekommen und die Garantie, dass Preussen das

föderative Verhältniss in Deutschland beibehalten wolle; wenn auch gewisse Verhältnisse, die beiden Mächten nachtheilig seien, auf dem Wege einer neuen Bundeskriegsverfassung geändert werden könnten; nur auf Garantien dass Preussen den Bund nicht zerstören wolle, lege der Kaiser den grössten Werth. Ferner sei es im Interesse Oesterreichs, dass wenn auch nur auf 10 Jahre Venedig von Preussen garantirt würde, wogegen wieder Oesterreichische Bataillone an der Seite Preussens für den Fall eines Angriffs auf Schleswig stehen würden — kurz eine gemeinschaftliche grosse Politik im conservativen Sinne gegen das Ausland und einen Länderaustausch in dem obenangegebenen Verhältnisse. Den Geldpunkt berührte er nicht.²⁰ In Betreff des Länderaustausches meinte er, Hohenzollern könne Oesterreich wenig nutzen, sein Hauptaugenmerk ginge auf Glatz oder eine Grenzregulierung, wie der jetzige gebräuchliche und keineswegs verletzend Ausdruck heisse, von Schlesien. Er wisse, wie das antinational in Preussen sei, aber der Fall läge jetzt doch anders als früher; früher hätte es sich immer nur um Abtretung gegen ein ideelles Recht gehandelt, jetzt handle es sich doch einfach um den Austausch von bestimmten Landesstrecken; das schöne Land Holstein gegen ein kleineres Stück Land. Dass dies zulässig hätten wir im Princip ja noch neulich bei einem Austausch mit Altenburg oder er wisse nicht genau wo, anerkannt.

Herr von Hoffmann bat mich dann noch dringend, doch dahin zu wirken zu suchen, dass die Herzogthümerfrage bald erledigt werde, denn die Jalousie in beiden Ländern sei zu gross und wenn das Provisorium länger dauere, so seien Reibungen unvermeidlich, der Kaiser habe die Sache satt und wünsche davon befreit zu sein, das glaube er zu wissen. Der Kaiser sei für den Frieden mit Preussen, in Oesterreich aber sei wie in Preussen eine grosse und einflussreiche Partei, die zum Kriege schüre. Er könne in dem Wunsche des Einverständnisses zwischen beiden Mächten nur rathen, dass die Herzogthümerfrage bald erledigt werde. Das könne er versichern, dass durch Frankreich wir die Herzogthümer nicht bekämen, denn er könne versichern, dass was Napoleon mit Preussen verhandle, Fürst Metternich in Wien auf den Tisch lege und ehe Napoleon mit Preussen abschliesse, würde er immer in Wien fragen, was Oesterreich biete. Er glaube gern, dass Napoleon Berlin gegenüber dasselbe Verfahren beobachte, und dass er, wenn es zur Krise käme, eben in Wien und Berlin fragen würde, wer ihm das Meiste bieten könne und da sei Oesterreich geographisch günstiger situirt!

Ich habe in der letzten Zeit genug gesprochen und habe diesmal hauptsächlich nur gehört, muss aber wiederholen, dass Herr von Hoffmann wiederholt versicherte, er sei eigentlich nicht ermächtigt Politik zu sprechen und es ginge über seine ganze Stellung hinaus, dass er in diese Fragen einging.

²⁰ "anders als dass er sagte, die Herzogthümerfrage liege ganz anders als die Lauenburgische. Holstein für Geld wegzugeben, wird in Oestreich als Schimpf und Schmach aufgefasst." (Marginal note in Manteuffel's handwriting).

Darf ich meine Meinung dahin äussern, dass Oesterreich wirklich die Beendigung der Herzogthümerfrage wünscht, einmal weil es sieht, dass es in ihnen keinen Boden hat, und dann weil sie zu entfernt von ihm liegen und es doch fürchtet durch das Hinziehen dieser Frage in Europäische Conflicte gerathen zu können. . . .

No. 12

ESTERHAZY TO MENSENDORFF, Ofen [Budapest], February 10, 1866

Letter. Original³⁰

[Haus-, Hof-, und Staatsarchiv, Vienna: in the so-called
Nachlass Rechberg]

Verehrtester Graf!

Im allh. Auftrage Sr. Majestät beeile ich mich Ihnen, unter Empfangsbestätigung des heutigen diplomatischen Einlaufes mitzuthellen, dass Sr. M. Ihnen in Bezug auf die gegenwärtige Haltung des Berliner Kabinetts nach Paris, London und München erlassenen Weisungen Allh. Seine volle Zustimmung ertheilt, und nicht minder *vollkommen* einverstanden ist mit den in Ihrem Einbegleitungs Berichte, im Hinblick auf alle möglichen Eventualitäten der nächsten Zukunft geäusserten Ansichten Sr. Majestät wünscht, dass Fst. Metternich Ihren Gesichtspunkt *klar* und *deutlich* auffasse, indem Allh. Dieselben von dem bewährten Takt unsers Botschafters erwarten, dass er *demgemäss* die bereits angebahnten freundlichen Beziehungen, zwar mit Würde und Mass, jedoch *derart* fortzuspinnen suchen wird, dass dieselben bei zunehmender Gefahr leicht bis zur Reife eines freundschaftlichen *Einvernehmens* weiter gefördert werden können.

Hier stehen wir bereits gegenüber der von mir längst vorausgesehenen u. ersohnten Crisis. Sie sind mir Zeuge, dass ich in dem gegenwärtigen Augenblicke eigentlich nicht für eine Besprechung zwischen Regierung und D.³¹ war, und dass ich dieses Projekt, namentlich für *meine Wenigkeit* nach Kräften abzulehnen suchte. Allein es wurde anders beschlossen; ich habe mich gefügt, und das Resultat hat für mich so ziemlich den Werth eines Handschuhwurfes. Was mich betrifft, so athme ich leichter. Meines Erachtens konnte die Regierung und durfte sie nicht länger den Anschein der Halbheit zugleich *allen* Partheien gegenüber auf sich lasten lassen. Jetzt wollen wir sehen wie sich unsere sogenannte *Rechte* benehmen wird. Ein Lebenszeichen steht diesmal jedenfalls von ihr zu erwarten, u. zwar in beiden Häusern; in der Magnatentafel vielleicht selbst mit einer kleinen Majorität.—In Agram übertreffen *alle* Partheien das Erdenkliche an Imprévu und Miserabilität.

³⁰ In Esterhazy's handwriting. Unpublished. One phrase is quoted in Stern IX, p. 470 note 1.

³¹ This letter is not clear, perhaps D. for Deák.

In Eile mit innigster Verehrung und Freundschaft

Ihr ergebenster
M. Esterhazy

Wer mag wohl den *vortrefflichen* Leit-Artikel in der "Presse" am Donnerstag, 8. inspirirt haben?? —

No. 13

MENDSORFF TO FRANZ JOSEPH, Vienna, February 19, 1866

Vortrag. Draft ²³

[*Haus-, Hof-, und Staatsarchiv*, Vienna: in the so-called
Nachlass Rechberg]

Unter den heute eingelaufenen Berichten und Briefen erlaube ich mir die Allerhöchste Aufmerksamkeit Euer Majestaet hauptsächlich auf den Berliner Einlauf, sowie auf den Bericht B. des Fürsten Metternich ehrfurchtsvoll zu lenken. Aus dem ersteren geht hervor, dass sich ein wichtiger Coup in Berlin vorbereitet,²³ über den Graf Károlyi noch im Unklaren zu sein scheint. Eben aber verlässt mich der Herzog v. Gramont, der mir in streng konfidentieller Weise Mittheilungen aus einem von Herrn Benedetti aus Berlin an ihn gerichteten Briefe machte. Letzterer scheint eine sehr merkwürdige Conversation mit dem Grafen Bismarck gehabt zu haben,²⁴ dessen Hauptinhalt ich mir erlaube, soweit mir der französische Botschafter denselben mitgetheilt hat, hier wiederzugeben. Die letzte Depesche des kais. Kabinetts scheint dem Grafen Bismarck keine Handhabe zu bieten, daran eine neue Drohung uns gegenüber zu knüpfen. Es scheint, dass dieses Aktenstück auf die Person des Königs nicht den aufregenden Eindruck gemacht hat, den Bismarck erwartete. Er sagte, man würde nicht darauf antworten, (wohl weil man eben nichts darauf zu antworten weiss), aber alle Banden seien nunmehr mit Österreich zerrissen und Preussen wieder frei, nach seinem eigenen Interesse zu handeln. Warum? geht aus dem Vordersatze freilich nicht hervor, genirt aber Bismarck nicht, car tel est son plaisir. Er beklagte sich dann bei Herrn Benedetti, dessen italienische Sympathien nur allzu bekannt sind, dass Lamarmora noch immer daran denke, Venedig auf friedlichem Wege zu erwerben und sollte es selbst 500 Millionen kosten, während ein Krieg doch kaum mehr als 200 Millionen kosten würde!

Was die Herzogthümerfrage betreffe, so wurde er um seine Ideen, auf

²³ Unpublished. At the top, a pencil note in a secretary's handwriting: "A. u. Vortrag. Abgegangen?" This *Vortrag* was probably not sent to the Emperor, who was at Budapest, because Mendsorff reported there in person for the council on February 21. See chapter x above.

²³ The words "ein . . . vorbereitet" are underlined in red.

²⁴ This conversation on February 14 is reported in *Origines diplomatiques* VII, pp. 297-299.

denen die zukünftige Grösse und das Heil Deutschlands beruhe, durchzusetzen, entweder mit neu zu ernennenden liberalen Kollegen eine neue freisinnige Bahn einschlagen oder auf seine Stelle resigniren, um Goltz, der nach keiner Richtung hin kompromittirt sei, seinen Platz einzuräumen. Das so neu organisirte Ministerium werde sich dann an die Spitze der deutschen Bewegung stellen und die Mittelstaaten entweder mitreissen oder vernichten. Jedenfalls ein kühner Plan, der, wenn er gelingen sollte, für uns, wie ich mir schon früher zu bemerken erlaubt habe, die meisten Gefahren in sich bergen würde. Die Ausführung desselben scheint mir jedoch nicht ganz so leicht. Bei dergleichen Sprüngen dürfte die Individualität seines Königs und sein bisheriger Tross die reaktionäre Militär- und Junkerpartei ein moderirendes Bleigewicht werden. Auf jeden Fall ist die politische Lage genug ernst, besonders wenn er uns auf dem Bundesfelde, welches wir für unsere entscheidende Aktion freizuhalten hofften, zuvorkommt [sic]. Doch muss man in diesem Moment leider Bismarck die Initiative für den ersten Akt der Feindseligkeit lassen; um aber auch auf ihn dann die ganze Verantwortlichkeit desselben zurückschleudern zu können. Kommt es aber zum Bruch, so müssen alle Rücksichten fallen und alle Mittel gegen Bismarck in Bewegung gesetzt werden.

Aus dem Berichte B des Fürsten Metternich werden E. M. a. g. zu entnehmen geruhen, dass Frankreich sehr zurückhält, aber ich hege die Zuversicht, dass Kaiser Napoleon eher sich uns zuneigen wird, nicht aus Zuneigung für uns, sondern aus Angst vor der übergrossen Erstarkung Preussens.

No. 14

AUSTRIAN COUNCIL OF MINISTERS, Ofen [Budapest],
February 21, 1866

Protocol²⁵

[Haus-, Hof-, und Staatsarchiv, Vienna: Kabinettskanzlei,
K.Z. 1476, M.R.Z. 52]

[Chairman: the Emperor.

Present: Count Mensdorff, Count Esterházy, Count Belcredi, Ritter von Franck, Herr von Majláth, Count Larisch, Ritter von Komers, Freiherr von Wüllerstorff, Count Haller, Baron Kussević.

Subjects discussed: Four questions of internal policy, followed by:]

*V. Verhalten wegen der drohenden Haltung Preussens in der Schleswig-Holsteinischen Frage.*²⁶

²⁵ Unpublished.

²⁶ For the diplomatic situation at this time, see chapter x above.

Die drohende Haltung, welche Preussen in der jüngsten Zeit in der Schleswig-Holsteinischen Angelegenheit angenommen, mache die Frage, so bemerkte *Seine Majestät*, rege, ob man diesen Demonstrationen ruhig zusehen soll, oder ob es nicht die Ehre, Würde und Sicherheit Oesterreichs verlange, solche kriegerische Vorbereitungen zu treffen mit denen man allen, noch so ernststen Eventualitäten ruhig ins Gesicht sehen könne. Er theile zwar die Ansicht, dass durchaus kein genügender Anlass zu einem so beklagenswerthen Ereignisse wie ein Zusammenstoss von Oesterreich und Preussen vorhanden sei; andererseits müsse man aber doch wohl erwägen, dass die preussische Armee gegenwärtig viel mobiler für das Feld sei, das dortige Eisenbahnnetz ihre Beförderung nach strategischen Hauptpunkten ausserordentlich erleichtere, während unsere Armee auf den äussersten Friedensfuss herabgesetzt worden, und ihre Completirung demnach sehr viel Zeit erfordere.

Graf Meussdorff sprach ebenfalls die Ansicht aus, dass für ein solches in seinen Folgen schwer zu ermessendes Ereigniss in den gegenwärtigen äusseren Beziehungen des Kaiserstaates kein Anlass vorliege, dass man übrigens bei den inneren Verwicklungen Preussens, der Stellung der Regierung gegenüber dem Abgeordnetenhause, der Unmöglichkeit einer längeren Fortdauer dieses Verhältnisses, nicht wissen könne, wohin das Verhängniss die dortige Regierung drängen werde. Auf eine preussische Depesche sei unterm 7. Februar eine entschiedene Antwort gegeben worden, worauf bisher dortseits ein vollkommenes Stillschweigen beobachtet wurde.

Baron Wüllerstorff machte darauf aufmerksam, dass hier auf eine zweifache Art in diplomatischem Wege vorgegangen werden könne. Wenn man die Schleswig-Holsteinische Frage für mehr als einen Conflict zwischen Oesterreich und den deutschen Bundesstaaten einerseits und Preussen anderseits ansehe, so wäre Anlass andere Grossmächte für ihre Lösung herbeizuziehen; betrachte man sie als eine Bundessache, so hätte deren Lösung mit Intervention des deutschen Bundes zu erfolgen.

Hieran anknüpfend bemerkte *Graf Esterházy*, dass speziell die Angelegenheit Schleswigs den deutschen Bund nicht berühre, wohl aber das künftige Schicksal von Holstein. Er spreche seine Ueberzeugung unumwunden dahin aus, dass jedes Schwanken von unserer Seite, noch viel mehr aber ein Nachgeben nur von den unheilvollsten Folgen für das eigene Vaterland begleitet sein würde. Hier heisse es die Zähne zeigen. Es sei Aufgabe unserer Diplomatie, unsere Haltung so einzurichten, dass über unsere Gesinnung und unser Benehmen bei unseren Allirten im deutschen Bunde durchaus kein Zweifel auftauchen könne, dass sie volle Beruhigung darüber erhalten, von unserer Seite sei von weiteren Concessionen an Preussen keine Rede mehr. Man rede von einer Verabfindung Oesterreichs mit einer bedeutenden Geldsumme; die bedrängte Finanzlage Oesterreichs lege den Versuch zur Verführung mit einem solchen Mittel nahe, allein gerade darin liege der Beweis, wie wenig der Gegner Unseren Monarchen und sein Land kenne.

Seine Majestät: Eine Verabfindung mit Geld ist eine Unmöglichkeit.

Graf Esterházy: So wie er gegenüber von Preussen nur ein entschiedenes Auftreten, eine volle Offenheit zu den deutschen Kleinstaaten und ein gemeinsames Vorgehen mit denselben anrathen könne, so sehr müsse er auf der anderen Seite die Nothwendigkeit betonen, dass man sich einer friedlichen Neutralität Frankreichs versichere. Was später geschehen werde, liege jetzt ausser Erörterung; er für sich halte allerdings dafür, dass mit der Zeit der Anfall der Herzogthümer an Preussen nicht verhindert werden könne.

Der *Finanzminister Graf Larisch* und der *Handelsminister Freiherr v. Wüllerstorff* riethen dringend zu einer wo möglich friedlichen Lösung der Angelegenheit, indem der Rückschlag auf die Finanzen, und auf die ganze Gewerbsthätigkeit der Monarchie bei einer kriegerischen Gestaltung der Ereignisse von unabsehbaren nachtheiligen Folgen sein würde.

Der *ungarische Hofkanzler v. Majláth* erwähnte der Aussage eines nicht unbedeutenden preussischen Emissärs, dass Preussen bei einem kriegerischen Vorgehen auf Russland und Italien sich stützen könne. Er stimme auch dafür, dass hierorts jede kriegerische Demonstration so lange immer möglich zu vermeiden sei, könne aber nicht verhehlen, dass wenn je Oesterreich in einen Krieg verwickelt werden sollte, es einen populärern als den gegen Preussen nicht geben könne.

Der Staatsminister *Graf Belcredi* pflichtete dem Grafen Esterházy in dem Punkte bei, dass es Aufgabe der Regierung sei, den deutschen Bundesgenossen Zuversicht in unsere Politic [sic] einzufössen; dabei dürfe man sich aber auch die Gefahr nicht verhehlen, dass namentlich in dieser Frage hinter den deutschen Regierungen die Democratie stecke, und diese vorwärts dränge, daher *wohl* darauf Bedacht genommen werden müsse, dass jede Aktion eine solche der legalen Regierung und nicht der demokratischen Revolution sei.

Seine Majestät äusserte zum Schlusse die Ansicht, dass Er damit einverstanden sei, kriegerische Vorbereitungen vor der Hand zu unterlassen und auf diplomatischem Wege ferner die Wahrung der Ehre und Würde des Landes, so wie seiner Interessen zu versuchen. Die Vorbereitungen übrigens auf dem Papier können alle getroffen werden, und es seien hiefür die erforderlichen Weisungen an das Kriegsministerium bereits ergangen.

No. 15

AUSTRIAN MILITARY CONFERENCE, Vienna, March 14, 1866²⁷

Protocol²⁸

[*Kriegsarchiv*, Vienna: *Militärkanzlei Seiner Majestät*,
1866, Faszikel 14]

Conferenz unter dem Allerhöchsten Vorsitze Seiner Majestät des Kaisers abgehalten am 14. März 1866.

²⁷ See chapter x above.

²⁸ Unpublished.

Anwesend: v. Benedek, v. Frank, Gf. Crenneville, v. Henikstein, B. Rossbacher, v. Schroth, v. Beck als Protokollführer.

Die am heutigen Tage von Seiten des Kriegs-Ministeriums telegrafisch angeordneten Märsche und Marschbereitschaften werden nochmals gelesen und zur A. H. Kenntniss genommen und befehlen Seine Majestät, dass auch die beiden Hussaren Regimenter der Brigade Boxberg aus Oberösterreich nach Böhmen in Marsch gesetzt, der Generalmajor B. Boxberg aber die Kavallerie-Brigade Fst. Auersperg zu übernehmen habe.

Das 24. Jäger-Bataillon und die Infanterie-Regimenter No. 71 und 74 werden, sobald der A. u. Vortrag erstattet sein wird, mit dem Gm. Gf. Rothkirch aus Italien nach Wien in Marsch gesetzt werden.

Von der Kavallerie-Depot-Escadronen. . . .

Feldmarschall-Lieutenant Baron Henikstein hält unter den gegebenen Verhältnissen eine Central-Stellung der Armee in der Gegend von Ollmütz [sic] für das Zweckmässigste; alle Entwürfe für ähnliche Kriegsfälle verlangen zwar die Aufstellung in Böhmen, dieselben sind aber auf eine bedeutende numerische Überlegenheit und auf eine Befestigung von Wien basirt, was beides — als nicht existirend — ausser der Rechnung gehalten werden muss.

Seine Majestät weisen darauf hin, dass die sächsischen Truppen höchst wahrscheinlich sich anschliessen und im Falle eines Angriffes der Preussen sich auf österreich. Gebieth zurückziehen werden. Es sind daher für den kommandirenden Generalen in Böhmen die nöthigen Instruktionen auszuarbeiten und derselbe anzuweisen, für die Aufnahme der sächsischen Truppen wie auch für deren Verpflegung die nöthigen Voreinleitungen zu treffen. Das 1te Armee-Korps selbst hat nur eine Bewegung gegen Sachsen auszuführen, um dessen Truppen aufzunehmen und kann dann gleich wieder nach Ermessen des Armee-Kommandanten näher an die Hauptarmee gezogen werden.

Während der Abwesenheit des Feldzeugmeisters von Benedek in Italien hat sich dessen Hauptquartier hier unter Fmlt. Bar. Henikstein zu konstituiren, alle erforderlichen Organe sind zu kommandiren ohne sie zu ernennen.

Der Generalstab hat allsogleich die nöthigen Rekognoszirungen in Mähren und demonstrative [?] auch in Böhmen zu bewirken. . . .

Sobald die Armee mobil gemacht wird, werden Seine Majestät die Publizirung eines sehr strengen Pressgesetzes anbefehlen.—

Vidi

Franz Joseph.

No. 16

AUSTRIAN COUNCIL OF MINISTERS, Vienna, April 8, 1866

Protocol ²⁹

[*Haus-, Hof-, und Staatsarchiv*, Vienna: *Kabinettskanzlei*,
K.Z. 1481, M.R.Z. 57]

[Chairman: the Emperor.

Present: Count Mensdorff, Count Belcredi, Count Esterházy, Ritter von Franck, Count Larisch, Herr von Majláth.

Subjects discussed: "I. Bericht des Kriegsministers über die durch die äusseren drohenden Verhältnisse bisher veranlassten Militär Mehrauslagen.

II. ditto über bevorstehende neue Auslagen.

III. Entwurf einer Antwort auf die letzte preussische Note.

IV. Vorbereitung für eine zweite Rekrutirung.

V. Bildung von Freiwilligen-Corps.

VI. Herbeischaffung der für den Fall des Ausbruches eines Krieges nöthigen Geldmittel."]

[I. The minister of war read estimates of extraordinary expenses required for the next steps in mobilization. Total sum demanded: 663,280 Gulden.

II. The minister of war gave a detailed exposition of the above demands.]

. . . Anknüpfend an diese Mittheilungen des Kriegsministers richtete hierauf *Seine Majestät* an die Conferenz die Anfrage, ob man vor der Hand diese militärischen Vorkehrungen als genügend erachte. Preussen habe mobilisirt, armire seine Festungen, sei zudem in der Lage, seine Truppen leichter zusammenziehen zu können; es habe demnach für den Fall eines ausbrechenden Krieges bereits einen sehr grossen Vorsprung gewonnen. Anderseits aber sei wohl zu bedenken, dass wenn man hierseits mit weiteren, augenfälligen Kriegsrüstungen vorwärts gehe, bei dem zu Tage liegenden Haschen von Seite Preussens nach einem Kriegsvorwande eine solche Kriegsrüstung als ein solcher benützt werden würde und dass dann der Krieg als unvermeidlich angesehen werden müsste.

Graf Mensdorf und *Graf Esterházy* sprechen die Hoffnung auf Erhaltung des Friedens aus. *Graf Mensdorf* bemerkte namentlich, dass die Concentrirung von Truppen in Böhmen von Preussen als willkommener Vorwand zu der dort angeordneten Truppenmobilisirung benutzt worden sei, dass man die Zahl dieser Truppen in Böhmen absichtlich vergrössert bis zu einer schlagfertigen, zum Einfall in Preussen bereiten Armee von 100,000 Mann hinaufgeschraubt habe.

²⁹ Unpublished.

Graf Esterházy glaubte seine Friedenshoffnung wesentlich darauf bauen zu sollen, dass dieser Krieg unausweichlich in einen allgemeinen europäischen in kurzer Zeit sich umgestalten würde, wo alle hängenden europäischen Fragen auf das Kriegstheater würden geworfen werden.—

Die Konferenzmitglieder einigten sich alle in der Ansicht, dass vor der Hand weitere militärische Massregeln zu unterbleiben haben.

III. Entwurf einer Antwort auf die letzte preussische Note.

Der Entwurf der Antwort wurde vom *Grafen Mensdorf* vorgelesen. Der Inhalt derselben geht wesentlich dahin, durch eine Zusammenstellung von bekannten Thatsachen den Beweis zu liefern, dass der Vorwurf kriegerischer Intentionen unter keinen Umständen auf Oesterreich, viel eher aber auf Preussen gewälzt werden könne, und unter erneuerten hieseitigen Friedensversicherungen das Ansuchen an Preussen zu stellen, die angeordnete Mobilisirung wieder rückgängig zu machen.—

Gegen den Inhalt der Antwortsnote wurde keine Einwendung gemacht, nur *Seine Majestät* liess die Bemerkung fallen, dass die preussische Note in einem auffallend groben Tone abgefasst sei, während dieser Vorwurf dem vorliegenden Entwurf nicht gemacht werden könne. Allein wer in seinem Rechte sich befinde, dürfe, ohne sich etwas zu vergeben, auch seinem Gegner gegenüber die Formen des Anstandes beobachten.

Seine Majestät bemerkte sodann noch ferner, dass es angezeigt erscheine, mit dem Baue des Brückenkopfes in Theresienstadt so lange nicht zu beginnen, bis nicht die Antwort Preussens auf die vorliegende Note eingetroffen sei.—Preussen würde darin einen neuen Vorwand sehen, hierseits das Vorhandensein kriegerischer Absichten zu behaupten, und, wenn es auch geradezu an's Lächerliche streife den Ausbau von Festungswerken als eine beabsichtigte kriegerische Agression zu bezeichnen, so sei es doch vorzuziehen, auch diesen Vorwand dem Gegner zu benehmen.

Der Kriegsminister wurde demnach angewiesen, mit der Inangriffnahme dieses Baues bis nach Einlangen der Preussischen Antwort inne halten zu wollen. . . .

* * *

No. 17

AUSTRIAN COUNCIL OF MINISTERS, Vienna, April 21, 1866

Protocol *

[Haus-, Hof-, und Staatsarchiv, Vienna: Kabinettskanzlei,
K.Z. 1488, M.R.Z. 64]

[Chairman: the Emperor.

Present: Count Belcredi, Ritter von Franck, Count Larisch,
Herr von Majláth.

* Printed in Redlich: *Das oesterreichische Staats- und Reichsproblem* II, pp. 795-796, with short omissions.

Absent on account of illness: Count Mensdorff and Count Esterházy.

Subject discussed: "Eventuelle theilweise Mobilisirung wegen drohender Gestaltung der Verhältnisse in Italien."]

Seine Majestät eröffnete die Sitzung mit der Bemerkung, dass nach von verschiedenen Seiten aus Italien eingelangten Nachrichten die Verhältnisse dort sich drohender gestalten, dass diesen Nachrichten zwar vor der Hand noch keine unbedingte Glaubwürdigkeit beizumessen sei, wesswegen heute an das Generalcommando in Verona um Ertheilung zuverlässiger Nachrichten telegraphirt worden sei, dass jedoch für den Fall der Bestätigung dieser alarmirenden Nachrichten, die Anordnung weiterer militärischer Massregeln zu einer unvermeidlichen Nothwendigkeit werde.—Die italienische Regierung habe sich in der neuesten Zeit sehr massvoll und sogar zurückhaltend benommen; wenn sie nun auf einmahl ihr Verhalten ändere und kriegerische Vorbereitungen in grossem Umfange treffe, so könne man mit Sicherheit darauf schliessen, dass dieselbe ebenfalls auf ein aktives Vorgehen von Preussen zähle.

Die zu treffenden Massregeln würden allerdings nur den Zweck haben, sich gegen Italien die nöthige Sicherheit zu verschaffen, als eine kriegerische Massregel gegen Preussen können sie nicht angesehen werden, was aber möglicherweise die preussische Regierung nicht hindern dürfte, dieselben neuerdings zu ihrem Zwecke und zu Kriegsclärmen auszubeuten. Diess könne jedoch nicht hindern, diejenigen Massregeln zu treffen, welche zur Sicherung der Monarchie nothwendig sind.

Der Staatsminister Graf Belcredi wies auf die verschiedenen Nachrichten hin, welche die übereinstimmende Angabe enthalten, dass bei Bologna ein Armeekorps von 40,000 Mann zusammengezogen werde. Nach einer heute eingelaufenen telegraphischen Depesche sei die Eisenbahn von und nach Bologna ausschliesslich für Militärtransporte in Requisition gesetzt worden. Dieses Telegramm rühre allerdings von einem Polizeicommissär her, dessen Nachrichten mitunter vielfache Uebertreibungen und Unrichtigkeiten enthielten; das vorliegende berichte aber über ein Factum dessen Richtigkeit festzustellen der Betreffende durchaus in der Lage war, da er an der Grenze stationirt ist.

Der Kriegsminister Ritter von Franck betonte die Dringlichkeit neuer militärischer Massnahmen. Bis jetzt sei ausser der Instandsetzung und Verproviantirung einiger nördlicher Festungen und dem Ankauf von Pferden wenig geschehen. Wenn die Nachrichten aus Italien sich bestätigen, so gewinne die Situation ausserordentlich an Ernst. Durch den Notenwechsel mit Preussen seien bereits 14 kostbare Tage für uns unbenützt verstrichen, während die Gegner im Norden und Süden sie gehörig ausgebeutet haben. Die neuen Massregeln, welche er zu beantragen sich erlauben werde, bedürfen übrigens zu ihrer Ausführung einiger Zeit und dürften jedenfalls vor dem Einlangen der preussischen Antwort nicht ins Leben getreten sein. Vor Allem aus aber sei noth-

wendig, dass die Geldmittel zu deren Ausführung dem Kriegsministerium zur Verfügung gestellt werden.⁴¹

* Als solche notwendige militärische Massregeln wurden hierauf vom Kriegsminister bezeichnet

1. Die Einberufung von 50 4ten Bataillons.
2. Die Einberufung von 11 Grenzregimentern und des Titler Bataillons und ihr Abmarsch nach Italien und Dalmatien.
3. Der durch den Einmarsch der Grenzer in Italien und Dalmatien bedingte Hinausmarsch anderer Truppen aus diesen Ländern.
4. Die Einberufung der Urlauber von 7 italienischen Regimentern.
5. Die Aufstellung der 4ten Grenzbataillone und Divisionen.

Die Kosten dieser Mobilisirung werden vom Kriegsminister auf 1,540,000 Gulden veranschlagt, wovon 1,140,000 Gulden monatlich wiederkehrende Auslagen, 400,000 Gl. ein für allemahl verausgabte sind.

Bisher sei für die Kriegsvorbereitungen vom Kriegsministerium ein Kredit circa 8½ Million in Anspruch genommen worden. Neben dem so eben neu verlangten werde aber noch ein weiterer für die Verproviantirung der Festungen im Süden erforderlich sein, der zwar noch nicht in Anspruch genommen wurde aber jeden Augenblick in Anspruch genommen werden könne, da der a.h. Befehl zu dieser Verproviantirung bereits erflossen sei.—

Der Finanzminister Graf Larisch bemerkte, dass er Alles aufbiethen werde, das erforderliche Geld zu beschaffen, dass die Schwierigkeit der Beschaffung jedoch keine geringe sei. Zur Verfügung stehen zur Stunde von ausländischem Gelde nur die 10 Millionen des jüngsten Pariser Anleiheus und 2 Millionen aus Hamburg. Wenn man sich auch beeile, das in der Minister Conferenz berathene Gesetz über ein neues mit der Bodencreditanstalt abzuschliessendes Anleihen zu publiciren, so müsse man bedenken, dass damit, da es auf der Hinausgabe von Tresorscheinen ruhe, noch kein baares vorhandenes Geld herbeigeschafft sei und dass wenn die Situation sich verschlimmern und eine kriegerische Wendung nehmen sollte, es dann schwer fallen dürfte, die Tresorscheine an Mann zu bringen.

Da die erwähnten 10 Millionen bloss als ein Ersatz für bereits gehabte Auslagen angesehen werden können, theilweise auch zur Bestreitung der Maicoupons bestimmt waren, so müsse man auf andere Bedeckungsmittel sinnen und es werde kaum vermieden werden können, das Project der Einziehung der 1 Gl. und 5 Gl. B. N. in Ausführung zu bringen.

Auf die *Anfrage Seiner Majestät** ob von Seite des wegen Unwohlsein abwesenden Grafen Mensdorf gegen die beantragten militärischen Massregeln eine Einwendung⁴² erhoben worden, wurde von dem *Staatsminister* die Antwort ertheilt, dass Graf Mensdorf mit der Einberufung der Grenzregimenter einverstanden sei und bloss einige Zweifel über die

⁴¹ The following passage, between the asterisks, has been summarized briefly in Redlich II, p. 796.

⁴² This word is incorrectly given as "Erwiderung" by Redlich.

absolute Dringlichkeit der Einberufung der 4ten Bataillons äusserte.—

Seine Majestät gab Ihre volle Zustimmung zu den beantragten Massregeln, bemerkte jedoch, dass ehe die betreffenden Befehle abgehen, man die verlangten zuverlässigen Nachrichten vom Generalcommando in Verona abwarten solle. Bestätigen diese die bereits eingelaufenen, dann müsse auch auf die Instandsetzung der Marine Bedacht genommen werden.

No. 18

ANTON VON GABLENZ TO FML. LUDWIG VON GABLENZ,
Vienna-Berlin, May 10-16, 1866

Letter. Original⁴⁸

[*Haus-, Hof-, und Staatsarchiv*, Vienna: P.A. XXXX. 298]

Wien, den 10. Mai 1866.

Mein lieber Bruder—

Unmittelbar nachdem ich Deinen Brief erhalten der mir schreibt viel hin und herzureisen um mündlich zu verhandeln, erhielt ich aus Wien eine Depesche nach welcher man die Ansichten gewechselt zu haben schien, so dass ich ungesäumt abreiste und Auguste⁴⁹ nur 10 Minuten sah, denn während sie um 6 Uhr eintraf gieng mein Zug um ½7 Uhr fort. Ich wohne hier unter den Namen Rittergutsbesitzer von Müller und keine Zeitung erwähnt meiner.—

Es gelang mir nun sehr bald bei Mensdorf [sic] wieder ein Eingehen auf meine Vorschläge zu erzielen auch unterstützte mich Bismark indem er officiell Baron Werther beauftragte über die betreffenden Vorschläge zu unterhandeln, seit Sonntag ist nun unterhandelt worden und es ward festgestellt dass man die Vorschläge als Basis der Unterhandlungen ansehe, heute 12 Uhr ist Baron von Werther zu Graf Mensdorf beschieden um die Meinung des Kaisers mitgetheilt zu erhalten und ist dieselbe zustimmend so werde ich um 2 Uhr zu Mensdorf gehen und von ihm über die Modifikationen die ich in Berlin durchsetzen muss entgegen zu nehmen. Die Details der Verhandlungen erlasse mir — das Unternehmen welches ich unternommen ist ein riesenhaftes und nur der Preis der Realisirung giebt einen den Muth so lange noch ein Hoffnungs-schimmer vorhanden, nicht zu verzweifeln. Nach meiner heutigen Unterredung mit Mensdorf schreibe ich weiter.⁴⁶ Die Punkte die mir Mensdorf aufgab im Interesse Oesterreichs zu wahren bestanden 1. in der Ehre Oesterreichs — 2. dem Interesse desselben — 3. Berücksichtigung

⁴⁸ In the handwriting of the sender. Unpublished.

⁴⁹ Anton's wife.—For the Gablenz negotiations, see chapter xi above.

⁴⁶ The following section of the letter was written after Gablenz' interview with Mensdorf on May 10, probably after he had returned to Berlin about May 13, but before he had seen Bismarck again.

des gemeinschaftlichen Vorgehens beim Bund—4. die Berücksichtigung des bundesstaatlichen Standpunktes—5. die Sicherstellung wegen Italien und 6. die Initiative der Vorschläge die keiner der Minister übernehmen wollte.

Die Ehre Oestreichs glaube ich nun gewahrt durch die Fassung dass Holstein niemals mit der Krone Preussens vereint werden darf also keine Annexion—ich glaube dass Bismark zustimmt.

Die Berücksichtigung des Bundes findet ihren Platz in der von [mir] entworfenen identischen Depesche an den Bundestag und Vorlegung des Vertrages beim Bunde.

Die Sicherstellung wegen Italien hoffe ich zu erreichen durch einen Nachtrags und geheimen Artikel, der nur modificirt von Bismark angenommen wurde.⁴⁶

Über Alles dies haben wir lange verhandelt und er hat mir zugesagt dem König ehebaldigst Bericht zu erstatten.

Der schwierigste Punkt war und ist der der Initiative—beide Gouv-ernement [sic] glauben sich zu viel zu vergeben wenn sie meine Vorschläge proponiren und bei der Schwierigkeit welche darin besteht dass kein auswärtiges Gouv-ernement die Initiative ergreifen wird und kann weil die zu enge Allianz Oestreichs und Preussens Niemandem convenirt, ist mein Vorschlag in Discussion, nemlich unter meiner Firma Alles festzustellen und wann es festgestellt ist den Grossherzog von Weimar durch mich zur Vermittlung aufzufordern. Über diese Dinge wird nun vorerst der König entscheiden; wenn er günstig entscheidet gehe ich an den Kaiser und wenn dieser günstig stimmt gehe ich zum Grossherzog von Weimar.⁴⁷—Du siehst lieber Bruder dass ich noch vollauf zu thun habe und dass noch viel Hindernisse zu besiegen sind wenn ich reüssiren soll. —Mit Bismark habe ich zu wiederholtenmalen 3stündige Conferenzen gehabt und höchst interessant auch die Conferenzen mit Mensdorf waren interessant—aber lieber Louis er und Bismark verhalten sich wie stehendes Wasser zu moussirenden Wein.—Die Rath- und Thatlosigkeit in Wien ist furchtbar und für Jemand der Entscheidungen sucht verzweiflungsvoll. Zerreiße die Schriftstücke über den geheimen Vertrag.—

Telegraphiren werde ich Dir Alles entscheidende in Geschäftsstyl.⁴⁸—
Adieu lebwohl—der Deine

Anton.

⁴⁶ The second half of this sentence and the rest of the letter were obviously written after Gablenz had talked with Bismarck.

⁴⁷ This shows that the letter was written before May 17, since the King accepted the idea of mediation by the Grand Duke of Weimar on May 16 (see his letter to the Grand Duke, May 16, in *Kaiser Wilhelms Weimarer Briefe* II, pp. 74-75) and Gablenz took it to Weimar (Latrille, in *Deutsches Wochenblatt* XI Jahrgang, 1898, No. 37, pp. 439-440).

⁴⁸ This refers to a private code used by the Gablenz brothers, in which the Kaiser figured as "Julius," the King as "Carlos," Bismarck as "Peter," the Duchies as "Carlsbad," etc. (HHS, *Nachlass Gablenz*).

No. 19

BLOME TO MENSENDORFF, Munich, May 20, 1866

Letter. Original⁴⁰[*Haus-, Hof-, und Staatsarchiv, Vienna: P.A. IV. 33*]⁴⁰

Hochverehrter Graf,

Keinem Ausspruche stimme ich so unbedingt bei als den zwei Sätzen aus Euer Excellenz gütigem Schreiben von gestern,⁴¹ wo es heisst

1., Hätte man den Entscheidungskampf verschieben können bis durch Napoleons Tod neue Crisen eintreten, so wäre es eines kleinen Opfers werth gewesen.

2., Das Ausland wird uns verhindern die Früchte des Sieges einzuernten und dieser Krieg wird vielleicht nur den Anfang einer Serie von Kriegen bilden.

Das Hinausschieben der Crisis war auch mein beständiges Ziel und in diesem Sinne befürwortete ich im verflossenen Sommer eine Verständigung mit Preussen.—Aber retrospectives Bedauern nützt zu Nichts, Bismarck hat uns nicht gestattet Napoleons Verschwinden von der Bühne abzuwarten, er hat muthwillig die Crisis heraufbeschworen und jetzt gilt es vorwärts zu gehen, wollen wir nicht gleichzeitig unsere Stellung in Deutschland und in Italien verlieren. Die Früchte des Sieges werden allerdings materiell gering sein, aber die moralischen thuen uns vor Allem Noth, es sind die Scharn von Magenta und Solferino auszuwetzen, das Vertrauen in Oesterreichs Stern und in Oesterreichs Willenskraft muss neu belebt werden. Folgt dann statt des langen Friedens eine Serie von Kriegen, so hat auch das eine gute Seite, nämlich diejenige die Revolution hintanzuhalten. *Inter arma silent leges* wie das lateinische Sprichwort fälschlich sagt, denn das ist nicht nothwendig, aber die constitutionellen Schwätzer, *loquaces revolutionarii*, welche durch fortwährende Legislation gerade die Beobachtung der *leges* erschweren. Ohne Krieg ist fauler Friede, Revolution — drum erschreckt die Perspective fernerer Kriege mich wenig, und ich fürchte nicht für inhuman zu gelten, denn die Revolution kostet noch mehr Ströme von Blut, sie untergräbt den Wohlstand noch gründlicher als Kriege und — was das Schlimmste ist, — sie zerstört die moralische Kraft der Nation, welche der Krieg im Gegentheile hebt. Wenn wir also Krieg brauchen, aber andererseits nicht angreifen dürfen, so bleibt nichts übrig als den Gegner zum Angriffe durch Anwendung solcher Mittel nöthigen, welche streng innerhalb der Grenzen des Rechtes bleibend, uns nie zum Vorwurfe gemacht werden können. Zu diesen rechne ich in erster Linie die Berufung der Stände Holsteins und die Formation des holsteinischen

⁴⁰ In Blome's handwriting.

⁴⁰ Unpublished.

⁴¹ This letter of Mensdorff's is not preserved in the Vienna archives.

Contingentes. Ich bedauere lebhaft, dass dies noch nicht geschehen, denn der Aufschub kommt Preussen zu Statte. Ob die Brigade Kalik verloren oder nicht verloren — das ist in meinen Augen in der grossen Sache ein winziger Nebenpunkt. Auch ist Gablenz der Mann in Holstein einen tüchtigen Widerstand mittelst eines dem terrain angemessenen Guerillaskriege zu organisiren. Dass man in Holstein selbst sich schlage, *das* ist die Hauptsache. Jeder Aufschub erhöht die Friedenssucht in Preussen und die geringste Nachgiebigkeit des Berliner Cabinets gewinnt ihm die Sympathien der erbärmlichen Mittelstaaten. Schlimmer als dies aber scheint mir, dass dadurch Italien in den Vordergrund tritt — das darf nicht sein, dort haben wir ganz Europa gegen uns und nicht etwa Deutschland für uns — Deutschland lässt uns wie 1859 sitzen. Ja, wenn Pfordten Recht hätte! Er meint Verständigung mit Preussen, Aufnahme Schweswigs in den Bund, dadurch Provocation Frankreichs und dann Krieg gegen Napoleon am Rhein und in Italien. Ja freilich, das wäre schön und das wäre auch in Deutschland populär. Aber es ist eben nicht zu machen; erstlich weil mit Preussen keine Verständigung möglich ist, die populär wäre, und weil der Franzose nicht angreifen wird, und weil dann Preussen und die Mittelstaaten uns in Italien nicht unterstützen werden, wo wir *dann* auch Frankreich zum Gegner hätten. Die Ausführung dieser Idee, ist meiner Ansicht nach erst möglich, wenn wir Preussen niedergeworfen haben und Frankreich Mine macht das linke Rheinufer zu nehmen. *Dann* macht sich *vielleicht* ein Schrei der Entrüstung und des Patriotismus in Deutschland Luft und wir können tutti quanti die Frontveränderung gegen Frankreich vornehmen. Dem Carbonaro in Paris ist nicht zu trauen und wir dürfen Venedig nur hergeben unter der Bedingung, dass die Einheit Italiens gründlich zerstört sei. Deshalb aber muss die Sache in Deutschland *beginnen*, und in Italien fortgesetzt werden.

Ich hatte heute Audienz beim alten König Ludwig, der mir wiederholt zurief: "Nur nicht angreifen! Herrlich die Stimmung in Oesterreich! Gratulire dem Kaiser! Sehr schön. Ganz anders als in Preussen. Bravo. Aber nicht angreifen! Und nicht den Rhein opfern, das nicht. Bismarck und Cavour niederträchtige Spitzbuben. König Wilhelm unbegreiflich — Schwachkopf. Ich komme von Nizza — Stimmung ganz italienisch, gar nicht für Frankreich. Baden erbärmlich. Immer so. Keine Neutralität. Aber nicht angreifen!"

Pfordten, mein kurzblickender Elihu Pfordten hat telegraphisch in Berlin beschworen uns schriftliche Anträge zu machen. Er zittert mehr denn je, dass es zum Kriege komme und meine Versicherungen hinsichtlich Frankreichs finden bei ihm keinen Glauben, weil mein preussischer College seinerseits dasselbe äussere und Oberstlieutenant Merlin hier dem Gl. Tann unumwunden gesagt habe: *pourquoi tenez-Vous au Palatinat, ce n'est qu'un embarras pour Vous*. Deshalb bittet er ja seinen Gedanken gleichzeitig über Bundesreform und Holstein mit Preussen zu verhandeln, nicht verwerfen zu wollen. Wir können dazu immerhin ja sagen, wenn wir nur gleichzeitig in Holstein vorgehen. Des Landes

Stimme zu hören, ist ganz gerechtfertigt, gerade wenn wir unterhandeln.

Wie hier über den jungen König räsonnirt wird, das übersteigt alle Begriffe. Im Volke heissen sie Ihn nur mehr den Wagnergesellen.

Gott inspirire den Kaiser und Eure Excellenz — der Augenblick ist entscheidend für Oesterreich's Gesicke!

In treuer Anhänglichkeit

Euer Excellenz
gehorsamer Blome.

APPENDIX B

THE SCHÖNBRUNN CONVERSATIONS, AUGUST 20 TO 25, 1864

LIST of published and unpublished sources for the discussions between Franz Joseph, King William, Count Rechberg, and Bismarck, concerning the Austro-Prussian alliance and the fate of Schleswig-Holstein. (See chapter iii).

1. August 24, 1864, midnight.—Autograph note of King William for Bismarck at Schönbrunn. (Fritz Hähnsen: *Ursprung und Geschichte des Artikels V des Prager Friedens* I, p. 330, No. 256).
2. August 27, 1864.—Letter of Franz Joseph to his mother. (*Briefe Kaiser Franz Josefs I. an seine Mutter* p. 338-339).
3. August 31, 1864.—Article, inspired by Bismarck, in the semi-official *Provinzialkorrespondenz*. (Long summary in French in *Origines* IV, pp. 99-100. Shorter summary in German in Jansen-Samwer: *Schleswig-Holsteins Befreiung* p. 381. The article was reprinted in the Austrian *Gazette officielle de Venise*: see *Origines* IV, p. 102).
4. September 7, 1864.—Letter of Freiherr von Roggenbach to Grand Duke Friedrich I of Baden, relating a conversation with Bismarck on September 6, 1864, at Baden-Baden. (Hermann Oncken: *Grossherzog Friedrich I. von Baden und die Deutsche Politik von 1854-1871*, I, p. 469. Variants in Karl Samwer: *Erinnerungen an Franz von Roggenbach* p. 82, and Jansen-Samwer p. 389).
5. September 8, 1864.—Letter of Bismarck to Count Rechberg. (Official copy in *Hauptarchiv des Auswärtigen Amtes*, Berlin. Printed in Bismarck, *Die Gesammelten Werke* IV, pp. 552-555, and *Oesterreichische Rundschau* XLIII, 1915, Heft 5, pp. 200-204.—Cf. the remark in Bismarck's letter of October 4, 1864, to Rechberg, in *G. W.* IV, p. 567, and Heinrich von Sybel: *Die Begründung des deutschen Reiches* III, p. 299).
6. September 11, 1864.—Letter of Freiherr von Roggenbach to Grand Duke Friedrich I of Baden, relating a conversation with King William of Prussia, on September 8, 1864, at Baden-Baden. (Oncken I, p. 471).

7. October 6, 1864.—Article in the Augsburg *Allgemeine Zeitung*, No. 283, by the Berlin correspondent (==), inspired by Bismarck or the Prussian Press Bureau:

"... Wenn in Paris die Aeusserung gefallen ist dass, da Preussen Oesterreich den Besitz Venetiens gesichert habe, Italien seinerseits diesen Besitz von Frankreich sich sichern müsse, so ist zu bemerken dass die preussische Regierung niemals daran gedacht hat für Venetien eine förmliche "Garantie" zu übernehmen, was allerdings nicht ausschliesst dass diese Regierung in einem gegebenen Fall und unter bestimmten Verhältnissen Oesterreich zur Behauptung Venetiens Beistand leistet. . . ."

8. October 24, 1864.—Undersecretary von Thile to Count Goltz, No. 318, *Ganz vertraulich*, quoting a marginal note of King William on a despatch of von Thile's. (Original in *Geheimes Staatsarchiv*, Berlin-Dahlem):

"Wer sich der Aeusserungen des Kaisers F. J. über die französische Politik erinnert, die er in Schönbrunn beim Exposé über die europäische Politik tat, nämlich, dass man dem Kaiser N. bei aller und jeder Gelegenheit *nicht trauen* dürfe, da er immer *zweierlei* bei allen seinen politischen Unternehmungen bezwecke. . . ."

9. November 1, 1864.—Confidential Austrian memorandum, reporting Bismarck's interview with Napoleon III at St. Cloud, October 25, 1864. (Original in the *Reichberg Nachlass* in the *Haus-, Hof-, und Staatsarchiv*, Vienna. Written on private letter paper, unsigned, dated at Paris, the memorandum, like several others, appears to be the report of a confidential agent to the Austrian Embassy):

"L'Empereur Napoléon a raconté à Mr. Drouyn de Lhuys la Conversation qu'il a eue avec Mr. de Bismarck le Mardi 25. Octobre à Saint Cloud. Cette Conversation a eu cela de caractéristique qu'elle consistait presque entièrement en une Série de questions que l'Empereur a adressées au Président du Conseil du Roi de Prusse.

C'est ainsi que l'Empereur a demandé ce qui en est définitivement du prétendu traité conclu entre la Prusse et l'Autriche. Mr. de Bismarck a nié qu'il existât un semblable traité et il a ajouté qu'à la vérité, il y avait eu quelques pourparlers à ce sujet mais que finalement il avait démontré à l'Autriche les difficultés presque insurmontables qu'il y aurait à faire un pareil engagement.

Il aurait dit au Gouvernement Autrichien: un traité avec l'Autriche serait ou éventuel ou définitif; s'il n'est qu'éventuel l'Autriche n'y gagnerait pas grand'chose, car il dépendrait toujours de la Prusse de décider si le cas

auquel s'applique l'engagement est arrivé ou non; si c'est au contraire un traité définitif, tout le désavantage serait du côté à la Prusse, car l'Autriche n'aurait qu'à faire naître les questions prévues par le traité, pour décider de la guerre. . . .

Une des questions les plus importantes que l'Empereur a adressées à Mr. de Bismark, et dont il a ensuite parlé à Mr. Drouyn de Lhuys, était celle-ci: que ferez-vous des Duchés. Mr. de Bismark aurait alors répondu avec une grande franchise qu'il a toujours considéré comme la solution la plus [word illegible], l'annexion des Duchés à la Prusse, mais qu'il n'avait pu obtenir le consentement du Roi. Le sort des Duchés dépendrait donc du résultat de l'examen du droit du Succession."

10. November 11, 1864.—Count Mensdorff to Count Karolyi, instructions, No. 1. (Draft, by Biegleben, in HHS, Vienna. Incomplete résumé in Sybel IV, p. 21).
11. November 19, 1864.—Count Karolyi to Count Mensdorff, No. 88 A, reporting several conversations with Bismarck between November 14 and 19, 1864. (Original, in HHS, Vienna).
12. February 8, 1865.—Memorandum of Bismarck, reporting his interview with Count Karolyi on this date. (*G. W. IV.* pp. 80-81).
13. March 11, 1865.—Baron Werner to Count Mensdorff, No. 26, reporting a conversation between Bismarck and Count Hohenthal, in Berlin. (Original, in HHS, Vienna):

"... Eine Aeusserung des Herrn von Bismarck gegen Graf Hohenthal, die *ungefähr* folgendermassen lautet: Es ist übrigens sonderbar, dass jetzt Oesterreich selbst mir dazu hilft, das Programm zu realisiren, welches ich im vorigen Sommer zu Schönbrunn, allein damals vergeblich, aufstellte: nemlich zu suchen, den gemeinschaftlichen Besitz der Herzogtümer bis dahin zu verlängern, wo eine anderweite Constellation der europäischen Verhältnisse auch andere Combinationen ermöglichen, und die inneren Interessen der beiden Grossstaaten ihre Allianz noch mehr wie heute populär machen würde."
14. January 9, 1867.—Letter of Count Rechberg to his brother, Albert. (Friedrich Engel-Janosi: *Graf Rechberg, Vier Kapitel zu seiner und Oesterreichs Geschichte* p. 149. Cf. Rechberg's letter of January 8, 1867, to his brother: Rechberg expressed his preference for the Partition of the Duchies, "wenn Preussen in einem förmlichen Akt die Teilung ausgesprochen und den Oesterreichischen Besitz Holsteins einmal definitiv anerkannt hätte, was uns nicht so leicht aus diesem Besitz verdrängt haben würde. . . ." — Engel-Janosi p. 147).

15. May 23, 1871.—Bismarck's interview with Freiherr Lucius von Ballhausen. (*Bismarck-Erinnerungen des Staatsministers Freiherrn Lucius von Ballhausen* p. 11. The passage should read "In Wien und Schönbrunn" instead of "In Wien und Gasten").
16. October 3, 1887.—Rechberg's interview with Dr. Johann Friedrich von Schulte. (Dr. von Schulte: "Aus meinen Tagebüchern," in *Deutsche Revue* XXIV, 1899, Heft 1, pp. 92-93. Reprinted in Schulte: *Lebenserinnerungen* I, p. 237, footnote 7).
17. 1889 and 1890.—Rechberg's interviews with Dr. Heinrich Friedjung. (H. Friedjung: *Der Kampf um die Vorherrschaft in Deutschland*, 10th edition, I, pp. 99-100; II, pp. 587-588, 589. A contrary version, which Friedjung rejected, is printed from Friedjung's notes of his interview with Rechberg on May 27, 1890, by Engel-Janosi: *Historische Studien A. F. Pribram zum 70. Geburtstag Dargebracht* p. 180).
18. June 13, 1890.—Bismarck's interview with Dr. Heinrich Friedjung. (Friedjung I, pp. 98-99; II, pp. 577-578. Partially reprinted in Robert Pahncke: *Die Parallel-Erzählungen Bismarcks* pp. 102-103, and in *G. W.* IX, pp. 48-49).
19. 1891? — Bismarck's account of the Schönbrunn Conferences in his Memoirs. (*Gedanken und Erinnerungen*, popular edition 1905, I, pp. 373-375).
20. June 6, 1892.—Rechberg's interview with an unnamed person. (*Neue Freie Presse*, No. 12403, March 3, 1899: "Ein Gespräch mit dem Grafen Rechberg." The writer purports to give Rechberg's words almost word-for-word, but the account contains obvious exaggerations, and in the last paragraph the events are confused).
21. July 15, 1892.—Bismarck's interview with John Booth and others. (John Booth: *Persönliche Erinnerungen an Bismarck* p. 79, reprinted in Pahncke p. 103, and in *G. W.* IX, p. 235; O. Jäger: *Erlebtes und Erstrebtes* p. 63, reprinted in Pahncke pp. 103-104, and in *G. W.* IX, p. 232).

APPENDIX C

AUSTRIAN MILITARY PREPARATIONS IN FEBRUARY AND MARCH 1866¹

FRANZ JOSEPH took the first step on or before February 21 by ordering the war department to make all necessary preparations on paper.² Before the end of February, a plan of campaign was ready. It contemplated a defensive war against Prussia and Italy.³ On February 28, Franz Joseph, still at Budapest, sanctioned this plan of campaign "with minor changes."⁴ He decided that the mobilization of the entire army should take place all at one time, and upon this basis he gave a score of orders: the intelligence bureau was asked to report upon the size and speed of mobilization of the Italian army; several regiments in Transylvania (the most distant province) were to be ready to march; the contracts for cannon and gun carriages were to be rushed through; and Benedek, the popular commander of all the forces in Venetia, was ordered to report in Vienna from March 6 on.⁵ All these preparations were to be carried out with the greatest possible secrecy.

Three days later the ubiquitous Colonel Beck, who was destined to become Franz Joseph's closest life-long friend,⁶ reported that these orders had been executed.⁷ The intelligence bureau declared that in North and Central Italy 148,000 men, well-equipped, with plenty of *materiel* could be ready for battle within four weeks of the mobilization order.⁸ The war office ordered six regiments and six batteries in Galicia and Transylvania to hold themselves in readiness for marching.⁹ Feldzeugmeister

¹ All documents cited in following sketch, unless otherwise stated, are found in the Vienna *Kriegsarchiv*, in the division *Militärkanzlei Seiner Majestät*, in Faszikels No. 14 and No. 74/III.

² Protocol of the council of February 21, 1866, Appendix A, No. 14.

³ Pencil draft, "Der Ordre de Bataille Ende Feb. 1866," in packet labelled "Geheime Kriegsrüstungsentwürfe."

⁴ Original memorandum entitled "Allerhöchste Befehle bezüglich der eventuellen Armee-Aufstellung gegen Preussen." Ofen, February 28, 1866.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ See his biography by the director of the *Kriegsarchiv*, Edmund von Glaise-Horstenau: *Franz Joseph's Weggefährte, Das Leben des Generalstabschefs Grafen Beck* (Vienna 1930).

⁷ Colonel Beck's *Vortrag*, Vienna, March 2.

⁸ Undated memorandum entitled "Aufmarsch Combination der sardo-italienischen Armee bezüglich eines Kricges gegen Oesterreich."

⁹ *Oesterreichs Kämpfe im Jahre 1866* (Vienna 1867) I, p. 75.

Benedek soon arrived in the capital and on March 7 took his place in a conference of officers which Franz Joseph had called on the advice of Henikstein, his chief of staff.¹⁰ As Mensdorff confided to the British ambassador, "the Emperor had not seen the Minister of War for a considerable time, and . . . the news from Prussia combined with reported overtures made at Florence from Berlin rendered it necessary to examine the exact condition of the Army."¹¹

This small select group of high military officials, which with varying membership assembled only five times during the three months preceding the war, has been magnified by Sybel and others into a council of marshals of the realm, to which eighteen leading generals from all the crown lands were said to have been summoned.¹² Sybel probably got his information from the poorly informed Prussian military attaché, Count Groeben,¹³ but he unaccountably cites as authority for his incorrect statements the Austrian official history of the war, where the dates of this "conference" (not a *Marschalrat*) are correctly given. If we may trust Colonel Beck's minutes, not even Archduke Albrecht, whose advice weighed heavily with Franz Joseph, was present at the two March meetings.¹⁴ From the subjects discussed, the manner of presentation, and the persons attending, one may fairly conclude that this "committee" helped to solve Franz Joseph's problem of securing advice and giving instructions with greater speed than by individual consultation. More often, however, the Emperor seems to have determined upon measures beforehand, and then presented them for further discussion, modification, or acceptance by the conference. This was the case with the crucial decision to move troops into Bohemia.¹⁵

On March 17, the chief of staff submitted his estimate of the time required for the mobilization of the Austrian army:¹⁶ the railroad authorities must have at least two weeks' notice; one additional week is required to prepare the orders for them; to mobilize individual troops any earlier would not save time but would only increase the disorder.

¹⁰ Baron Henikstein and FML Rossbacher, of the war ministry, advocated an "Ausrüstungs-Comité" to decide on preparations (Beck's *Vortrag*, March 2).

¹¹ Bloomfield to Clarendon, March 8, 1866, No. 89 Confidential (F. O. 7 Austria 704).

¹² Sybel (IV, pp. 221-222) assumes continuous sessions from March 7 to 13. Friedjung (I, pp. 167, 175) is correct in the dates of the two conferences, but exaggerates the attendance. Stern (IX, p. 455) has followed Friedjung.

¹³ Graf Waldersee: *Denkwürdigkeiten* I (Berlin 1922) p. 24, for Groeben.

¹⁴ See below.

¹⁵ See the minutes of the conference of March 14, in Appendix A, No. 15.

¹⁶ Memorandum of Henikstein for Crenneville, [Vienna], March 17, entitled: "Promemoria über die Zeit welche zur Ausführung des strategischen Aufmarsches erforderlich ist, und die unerlässlichen einschlägigen Massregeln." (Faszikel 14).

In conclusion, Henikstein declared that orders to the railroads would be almost equivalent to open mobilization, and he warned against counter-orders after the mobilization has begun: "Das grösste Unheil kann daraus entstehen. *Vom Beginne der Bewegung* bedarf man *für den Aufmarsch*, wenn keine Störung eintritt, 6 Wochen; also *vom Tage des Befehls*, 8 Wochen, wenn alle Anordnungen vorbereitet sind."

The personnel and the subjects of discussion in the five military conferences held under the chairmanship of the Emperor are given here in brief abstracts, from Colonel Beck's meager minutes:⁴⁷

Conference of March 7, 1866.—Chairman: the Emperor. Attended by: FML Archdukes Leopold and Wilhelm, FZM Benedek, FML Mensdorff, FML Franck, FML and First Adjutant General Crenneville, FML and Chief of the General Staff Baron Henikstein, FML Rossbacher, Major General Baron John. Secretary: Lieutenant-Colonel von Beck.

The Emperor: "Für den Fall eines Krieges gegen Preussen und einer gleichzeitigen Kriegsausrüstung und Aufstellung in Italien, ist es noch wünschenswerth hier alle jene Vorarbeiten und Einleitungen zu besprechen welche als Vorbereitung zu einer raschen Mobilisirung nothwendig sind."

[There follow purely military discussions, with no references to the political situation. No mention is made of the military arrangements of any other German state. Mensdorff spoke only once, concerning Trieste.]

— — —
Conference of March 14, 1866.—See Appendix A, No. 15.
— — —

Conference of April 8, 1866.—Chairman: the Emperor. Attended by: FML Archduke Albrecht, Crenneville, Franck, Mensdorff, Henikstein, Rossbacher. Secretary: Beck.

Subject discussed: formation of a reserve army; 5th battalions. [There follows a long military discussion. Benedek spoke against raising volunteers. Archduke Albrecht said that they had been raised in every war, and in such a popular war as this against Prussia, would be proposed on every hand. No remarks by Mensdorff are reported.]

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Conference of May 13, 1866.—Chairman: the Emperor. Attended by: Benedek, Crenneville, Franck, Mensdorff, Henikstein, GM von Krismanič, Colonel Ritter von Schönfeld. Secretary: Beck.

Subject discussed: whether and how to strengthen the Kalik brigade, as Gablenz desires, in cooperation with the Hanoverian army; the question of the cooperation of the 8th federal army corps, where it should be stationed and in what manner it should cooperate.

⁴⁷Faszikel 14: "1866. Akten den Feldzug Betreffend." The minutes of all five meetings are in the handwriting of Colonel Beck. Each one is entitled simply "Conferenz unter dem Allerhöchsten Vorsitze Seiner Majestät des Kaisers."

Discussion: Indefinite news from the German states. Desirable to have a Bavarian officer come to Vienna. The 8th corps will have to protect Mainz. Prince Alexander of Hesse must negotiate with Nassau and now or later with Electoral Hesse concerning union of their troops with 8th corps. Colonel Schönfeld will find out whether an effort should be made from here to influence these governments. He is to stop a day in Munich to orient himself, and then to report to Prince Alexander the present views as to Mainz and the "Aufmarsch" of the 8th corps.

Conference of May 17, 1866.—Chairman: the Emperor. Attended by: Benedek, Crenneville, Franck, Mensdorff, Henikstein. Secretary: Beck.

Subjects discussed: transportation of Saxon supplies through Austria; mission of Colonel Wimpffen to Cassel; retreat of the Kalik brigade from Holstein.

Discussion: The Saxon supplies to be temporarily transported to southwestern Bohemia. Wimpffen is to secure the junction of the Hessian troops with the 8th army corps. The doubtful attitude of Hanover makes a decision regarding the future action of the Kalik brigade imperative. Benedek thinks the brigade should stand its ground to the last rather than capitulate. Henikstein suggests that all but a very small detachment be withdrawn at once. Mensdorff "*haltet den Moment für eine solche Massregel, die gleichzeitig die holsteinische Frage vor den Bund bringen müsste, für unzeitig und würde dadurch Holstein so gut wie aufgegeben werden.*"

The Emperor concluded, "*es handle sich für die Brigade Kalik nur noch um die Alternative, ob sie in nächster Zeit schon herausgezogen werden soll oder ob man sie daselbst zu Grunde gehen lassen wolle. Wird die Brigade zurückgezogen, so muss dies auch offen ausgesprochen werden; doch ist es heute noch nicht an der Zeit diesen Rückmarsch anzuordnen, es muss noch Zeit gewonnen werden, um die Ausrüstung und den Aufmarsch der Armee zu ermöglichen und muss sich auch die Situation in Hannover vollständig klären; aber vorbereitet muss Alles werden, um die Abberufung und den Rücktransport der Brigade im Falle des Bedarfes so rasch und unbehindert als möglich durchführen zu können.*"

"Die Ergänzungen für die Brigade Kalik sind *nicht* abzusenden, Fmlt. B. Gablenz ist von Seiten des Ministers des Äussern durch ein beruhigendes Schreiben zum Aushaaren aufzufordern, und Gm. Prinz Solms ist allsogleich nochmals nach Hannover zu entsenden, um die dortige Situation aufzuklären. . . ."

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- Gooch, G. P. and Ward, A. W. (editors). *Cambridge History of British Foreign Policy 1783-1919*. 3 vols., London 1922-1923.
- Gorce, Pierre de la. *Histoire du Second Empire*. 4th edition, 7 vols., Paris 1896-1905 Volume IV for the antecedents of the war of 1866.
- Govone, Uberto (editor). *Il Generale Giuseppe Govone, Frammenti di Memorie*. 2nd edition, Turin 1911. French edition (Paris 1905), with a few additional documents. Govone was a special Italian emissary to Berlin from March to July 1866, and his reports constitute one of the chief sources for Bismarck's policy during those months. The French edition has been used exclusively.
- Grant Duff, Sir M. E. *Studies in European Politics*. Edinburgh 1866. Intelligent contemporary comment on the German situation before 1866 by a friend of the well-informed Robert Morier.
- [Great Britain. Foreign Office.] *British and Foreign State Papers*. Volumes LIV to LVII, London 1864-1867. The important documents are all reproduced in the *Archives diplomatiques* or the *Staatsarchiv*.
- Grundmann, Gerhard. *Der gegenwärtige Stand der historischen Kritik an Bismarcks "Gedanken und Erinnerungen" Band I*. Berlin 1925.
- Guichen, Eugène Vicomte de. "Les relations austro-prussiennes du

- XVII^e siècle à 1870," in *Académie des Sciences Morales et Politiques. Séances et Travaux*, 1928, pp. 463-486.
- Guichen, Eugène Vicomte de. "Les relations commerciales russo-allemandes du XIX au XX siècle," in *Académie des Sciences Morales et Politiques. Séances et Travaux*, 1919, pp. 356-375.
- Guichen, Eugène Vicomte de. "Les relations politiques russo-allemandes du XIX au XX siècle," in *Académie des Sciences Morales et Politiques. Séances et Travaux*, 1918, pp. 503-529.
- Guichen, Eugène Vicomte de. "L'influence de la Russie et de l'Italie dans la formation de l'unité allemande," in *Académie des Sciences Morales et Politiques. Séances et Travaux*, 1925, pp. 424-437. These four articles are cursory interpretive sketches based upon slight foundations.
- Hähnsen, Fritz (editor). *Ursprung und Geschichte des Artikels V des Prager Friedens. Die deutschen Akten zur Frage der Teilung Schlesiens (1863-1879)*. 2 vols., Breslau 1929. Excellent collection of documents, supplementary to Platzhoff, of interest chiefly for the North Schleswig problem, but other topics are not rigidly excluded. Very full on the Vienna treaty negotiations of September and October 1864, on Zedlitz' reports from the Duchies, etc.
- Hahn, Ludwig (editor). *Fürst Bismarck Sein politisches Leben und Wirken, urkundlich in Tatsachen und des Fürsten eigenen Kundgebungen dargestellt*. . . 5 vols., Berlin 1878-1891. Vol. I has material to 1870. Data not always reliable, though Hahn was one of Bismarck's underlings in press matters.
- Hahn, Ludwig (editor). *Zwei Jahre Preussisch-Deutscher Politik, 1866-1867. Sammlung amtlicher Kundgebungen und halbamtlicher Äusserungen*. . . Berlin 1868.
- Haller, Johannes. *The Epochs of German History*. (London, 1930).
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- Harcourt, Comte Bernard d'. *Les quatre ministères de M. Drouyn de l'Huys*. Paris 1882. Superseded for the period after 1863 by the *Origines diplomatiques de la guerre de 1870-1871*.
- Hartung, Fritz. "Verantwortliche Regierung, Kabinette, und Nebenregierungen im konstitutionellen Preussen 1848-1918," in *Forschungen zur brandenburgischen und preussischen Geschichte* XLIV, 1931, pp. 1-45. Very important for the years 1860-1862, but also for Manteuffel's later influence upon the King. Based on the Manteuffel and other private papers in the Dahlem archives.
- Hassel, Paul. *Aus dem Leben des Königs Albert von Sachsen*. 2 vols., Berlin 1898. Based on Saxon official documents, giving Saxony's policy in German affairs, and occasional glimpses of the underlying motives of Franz Joseph, Albert's cousin and intimate friend. Volume II has been used.
- Hassell, W. von. *Geschichte des Königreichs Hannover*. 2 vols., in 3, Bremen 1897-1901. Valuable for the reports of the Hanoverian envoys in Berlin and Vienna. Hostile to Bismarck's policy.

- Hauterive, Ernest d'. *Napoléon III et le Prince Napoléon. Correspondence inédite*. Paris 1925. A rich source for the relations between the two men, except in the two years preceding the war of 1866.
- Hecker, Oswald Artur. "König Johann von Sachsen und die deutsche Einheitsbewegung," in *Deutsche Rundschau* CLI, 1912, pp. 257-275. An interpretation based on the publication of King Johann's letters to the kings of Prussia.
- Hengelmüller von Hengelvar, Ladislav Freiherr von. "Graf Alois Karolyi. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der oesterreichisch-ungarischen Diplomatie," in *Deutsche Revue* XXXVIII, 1913, Heft 1, pp. 274 ff.; Heft 2, pp. 33 ff., 154 ff., 277 ff.; Heft 3, pp. 33 ff., 161 ff., 299 ff.; Heft 4, pp. 35 ff.; XXXIX, 1914, Heft 3, pp. 33 ff., 217 ff.; XL, 1915, Heft 2, pp. 294 ff.; Heft 3, pp. 76 ff. An objective though rambling study, not only of the career of the Austrian envoy in Berlin, but of the diplomacy of Austria from 1859 to 1864. Its unique value and great importance lies in the fact that it was the only study for which an examination of the confidential documents of the *Ballplatz* was permitted, before the revolution of 1918.
- Henry, Paul. *L'abdication du Prince Cuza et l'avènement de la dynastie de Hohenzollern au trône de Roumanie. Documents diplomatiques*. Paris 1930. Prints all the chief documents on the subject, from the archives of Paris, Vienna, and Bukarest, preceded by an unpretentious sketch of the incident. The lack of Prussian documents renders it incomplete.
- Herre, Paul. "Bismarck und Österreich-Ungarn," in *Der Panther* III, 1915, Heft 3, pp. 284-311. Conventional summary following Lenz and Marcks.
- Herschel, Olga. *Die öffentliche Meinung in Hamburg in ihrer Haltung zu Bismarck 1864-1866*. Hamburg 1916. Suffers from lack of knowledge of archive material.
- Hesselbarth, H. "Die Urheberschaft der Übereinkunft von Gastein," in *Historische Vierteljahrschrift* XVII, 1914, Heft 2, pp. 229-241. Suffers from lack of source material, and overstrain of the imagination.
- Hesselbarth, H. "Eine freimüthige Aussprache Bismarcks über seine auswärtigen Politik . . . September 1864," in *Historische Zeitschrift* CXXVIII, 1919, pp. 475-484. The author is justified in calling attention to the importance of document No. 837 in volume IV of the *Origines diplomatiques* as a revelation of Bismarck's plans; but his indictment of Savigny as the informant of the French is not convincing.
- Hirschfeld, Ludwig von. *Friedrich Franz II. Grossherzog von Mecklenburg-Schwerin*. 2 vols., Leipzig 1891.
- Hock, Karl Freiherr von. "Der Vertrag vom 11. April 1865," in *Oesterreichische Revue*, 1867, Heft 1. A study of the negotiations, by the principal Austrian negotiator.
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- tische Reden und Schriften. In Auswahl.* Vienna 1906. Largely *Herrenhaus* speeches of this liberal *Grossdeutscher*. Important for intelligent Austrian opinion.
- Hoff, Hinrich Ewald. *Schleswig-Holsteinische Heimatgeschichte*. 2 vols., Kiel 1910-1911. Scholarly and readable account.
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- Hofmann, Albert von. *Politische Geschichte der Deutschen*. 5 vols., Stuttgart 1922-1928. Volume V treats the years 1740 to 1914. Unusually full on foreign relations, well-informed, but too strongly national point of view.
- Holborn, Hajo (editor). *Aufzeichnungen und Erinnerungen aus dem Leben des Botschafters Joseph Maria von Radowitz*. 2 vols., Stuttgart 1925. As secretary in the Prussian Embassy in Paris in 1865 and 1866, Radowitz picked up many interesting bits of diplomatic news, but his memoirs are not free from inaccuracies.
- Holmes, Oliver Wendell. *John Lothrop Motley: a Memoir*. Boston 1879. Several letters from Motley when minister in Vienna, 1861 to 1867, giving glimpses of the court life.
- Hopf, Wilhelm (editor). *Die deutsche Krisis des Jahres 1866, vorgeführt in Aktenstücken, Aufzeichnungen, und quellenmässigen Darstellungen*. Third edition, enlarged, Hannover 1906.
- Hozier, H. M. *The Seven Weeks' War: its Antecedents and its Incidents*. 2 vols., Philadelphia 1867. Based upon reports to the *London Times*.
- Ibbeken, Rudolf (editor). *Die auswärtige Politik Preussens 1858-1871. Diplomatische Aktenstücke*. Volume III, Oldenburg 1932. The first installment of the most complete and valuable collection of documents for Bismarck's diplomacy before 1871. In contrast to the collections edited by Thimme and Oncken, the selection of documents and the editorial work are refreshingly free from any *Tendenz*. Objective impartiality is assured under the direction of Professors Erich Brandenburg and Otto Hoetzsch. Here for the first time are brought together the sources not only for Bismarck's official and ostensible policy, but also for his manifold secret manoeuvres often kept from the King's knowledge. Drawing from all the chief European archives, this publication outranks the French *Origines diplomatiques* as the most important of all collections for the decade of the 1860's.
- [Italy. Ministero degli Affari Esteri.] *Documenti diplomatici presentati al Parlamento, dal Ministro degli Affari Esteri il 21 dicembre 1866*. Florence 1866. Documents on the Venetian question, 11 January to October 1866; on commercial negotiations with the *Zollverein* and recognition of Italy by certain German states, 1 December to 10 June 1866.
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- Jaszi, Oscar. *The Dissolution of the Habsburg Monarchy*. Chicago 1929. Keen and penetrating analysis of the political and social forces within the Austrian state-organism, from a liberal and cosmopolitan point of view.
- Johann Georg, Herzog zu Sachsen (editor). *Briefwechsel zwischen König Johann I. von Sachsen und den Königen Friedrich Wilhelm IV. und Wilhelm I. von Preussen*. Leipzig 1911.
- Johann Georg, Herzog zu Sachsen. *König Albert von Sachsen*. Leipzig 1922. Superficial and personal, but supplements Hassel after 1870.
- Johann Georg, Herzog zu Sachsen. "König Johann von Sachsen im Jahre 1866," in *Neues Archiv für sächsische Geschichte* XLVII, 1926, pp. 295-328. More valuable for Johann's policy after the war than before, but sheds new light on both periods, from letters of the King and Queen.
- Jordan, Herbert. *Die öffentliche Meinung in Sachsen 1864-1866*. Kamenz 1918.
- Junk, C. *Aus dem Leben des k.k. Generals der Cavallerie Ludwig Freiherrn von Gablenz. Eine Biographische Skizze nach den Mitteilungen des Generals*. Vienna 1874. Contains interesting bits of information not found elsewhere.
- [Junk, C.] "Holstein unter der oesterreichischen Statthalterschaft. Rückerinnerungen an die Zeit von 1865 und 1866," in *Deutsche Vierteljahrsschrift* CXIX, 1867, pp. 203-242. A description of the activities of Gablenz and Hofmann in administering Holstein, from the pen of their attaché for publicity.
- Kaindl, Raimund Friedrich. *Oesterreich, Preussen, und Deutschland: Deutsche Geschichte in Grossdeutscher Beleuchtung*. Vienna 1926. Thought-provoking protest against the Small-Germany tradition.
- Keudell, Robert von. *Fürst und Fürstin Bismarck: Erinnerungen aus den Jahren 1846 bis 1872*. Berlin 1901.
- Kienast, A. *Die Legion Klapka. Eine Episode aus dem Jahre 1866 und ihre Vorgeschichte*. Vienna 1900. Not always accurate revelations of Bismarck's relations with the Hungarian and Balkan revolutionary movements, based on the Vienna *Kriegsarchiv*.
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- Kohl, Horst (editor). *Anhang zu den Gedanken und Erinnerungen des Fürsten Bismarck: Vol. I, Kaiser Wilhelm I. und Bismarck; Vol. II, Aus Bismarck's Briefwechsel*. 2 vols., Berlin 1901.
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- Kohl, Horst (editor). *Bismarckbriefe 1836-1873*. 8th edition, Leipzig 1900.
- Kohl, Horst (editor). *Bismarck-Jahrbuch*. 6 vols., Leipzig 1894-1899. Valuable documents for Prussian policy toward Austria and France, in volumes III to VI.
- Kohl, Horst (editor). *Briefe Ottos von Bismarck an Schwester und Schwager . . . 1843-1897*. Leipzig 1915.
- Kohl, Horst (editor). *Die politischen Reden des Fürsten Bismarck: Historischkritische Gesamtausgabe*. 14 vols., Stuttgart 1892-1905. The best collection, with summaries in the index at the beginning of each volume.
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- Kralik, Richard von. *Österreichische Geschichte*. 3rd edition, Vienna 1914. A lively account from the Austrian Catholic point of view, sprinkled with apt quotations from contemporary writers.
- Krones, F. von. *Moritz von Kaiserfeld: Sein Leben und Wirken als Beitrag zur Staatsgeschichte Oesterreichs in den Jahren 1848 bis 1884*. Leipzig 1888. Partly from unpublished letters of this leader of the Constitutional party in the Austrian Reichsrat and the Styrian Landtag.
- Kuehn, Joachim. *Das Ende einer Dynastie! Kurhessische Hofgeschichten*. Berlin 1929. Aims to show the influence of the mistresses of the last two Kurfürsten on the policies of Hesse, and claims to have used the archives of Berlin, Paris, Cassel, and Vienna. Very brief on 1866, his account is just a running transcript of the reports of Count Paar, the Austrian envoy. Unscholarly, journalistic.
- Kulesa, Adolf. *Die Kongressidee Napoleons III. im Mai 1866*. Giessen dissertation 1927. A systematic and careful study, marred somewhat by lack of knowledge of unpublished sources and by nationalistic tone.
- Kupke, Archivrat Dr. (editor). *Vor fünfzig Jahren. Briefwechsel zwischen Dr. Karl Lorentzen und den Führern des Augustenburgischen Partei, 1863-1866*. Leipzig 1914. Semi-official news from many of the German chancelleries.
- La Marmora, Alfonso. *Un po' piu di luce sugli eventi politici e militari dell' anno 1866*. Florence 1873.
- Lange, Karl. *Bismarck und die norddeutschen Kleinstaaten im Jahre 1866*. Berlin 1930. Valuable for citations from the archives of Weimar, Meiningen, Altenburg, Sondershausen, Greiz, Wolfenbüttel, Zerbst, Hamburg, Berlin, and Charlottenburg, and bibliography for their diplomacy.
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- Latrille, Dr. "Zur Sendung des Freiherrn A. von Gablenz," in *Deutsches Wochenblatt*, 16 Sept. 1898, XI, No. 37, pp. 438-441. Little known, yet very important article, printing valuable Gablenz documents. Especially good for Bismarck's motives and connection with the affair, but information for the Austrian side is strangely lacking.
- Lee, Sir Sidney. *Queen Victoria. A Biography*. Revised edition, London 1904.
- Lehmann, Max. "Der Krieg in Westdeutschland und die vorangehenden Unterhandlungen des Jahres 1866," in *Historische Zeitschrift* XXII, 1869, pp. 80-147. Good early account, favorable to Prussia.
- Lenz, Max. *Geschichte Bismarcks*. 4th edition revised, Leipzig 1913. Still the best biography for the period from 1848 to 1871.
- Lenz, Max, and Marcks, Erich (editors). *Das Bismarck-Jahr, eine Würdigung Bismarcks und seiner Politik in Einzelschilderungen*. . . . Hamburg 1915. Uneven sketches of various aspects of Bismarck's character and activities, by prominent authorities.
- Lettow-Vorbeck, Oskar von. *Geschichte des Krieges von 1866 in Deutschland*. 2nd edition, 2 vols., Berlin 1910. Volume I contains summary of diplomacy preceding the war with a few bits of new information.
- Liman, Paul. *Bismarck-Denkwürdigkeiten . . . aus seinen Briefen, Reden, und letzten Kundgebungen, sowie nach persönlichen Erinnerungen*. 2nd edition, Berlin 1899. Convenient collection, very full on 1864-1866, and better arranged than Poschinger.
- Loftus, Lord Augustus. *The Diplomatic Reminiscences of Lord Augustus Loftus, P.C., G.C.B., 1862-1879. Second Series*. 2 vols., London 1894. Written from his despatches as British envoy in Berlin in 1866, yet including a few interesting comments of Bismarck which were not confided to the foreign office. On the other hand, certain passages in the despatches have been doctored or omitted from the book.
- Lorenz, Ottokar. *Kaiser Wilhelm und die Begründung des Reiches 1866-1871, nach Schriften und Mitteilungen beteiligter Fürsten und Staatsmänner*. Jena 1902. Lorenz was an official in the Vienna archives till the summer of 1865, when he was driven out "by his enemies." His vivid judgments on the personalities of the *Ballplatz* must therefore be taken with reserve.
- Lorenz, Reinhold. "Gablenz in Holstein. Ein Beitrag zur deutschen Staats- und Volksgeschichte," in *Zeitschrift der Gesellschaft für schleswig-holsteinische Geschichte* LIX, 1930, pp. 1-216. An admirable and definitive treatment, based on the Vienna archives.
- Losch, Philipp. *Geschichte des Kurfürstentums Hessen 1803-1866*. Marburg 1922. A good summary, but fails to quote authorities, though he has used unpublished material.

- Lotz, Walther. *Die Ideen der deutschen Handelspolitik von 1860 bis 1891*. Leipzig 1892. Excellent analysis of the relation between the Zollverein negotiations and Austro-Prussian diplomacy.
- Luckwaldt, Friedrich. "Das europäische Staatensystem 1850-1890," in *Propyläen-Weltgeschichte* VIII (Berlin 1930), pp. 73-384. Contains an unusually stimulating and original account of Austro-Prussian relations from the latest and best printed sources.
- Lülling, H. *Die Entwicklung von Julius Fröbel's politischen Anschauungen von 1863-1871, mit besonderer Berücksichtigung seiner Stellung zur deutschen Frage*. Leipzig dissertation 1931.
- Luzio, Alessandro. *Francesco Giuseppe e l'Italia*. Milan 1917. The first of the recent revelations of Malaguzzi's mission to Vienna, superseded by the author's later articles.
- Luzio, Alessandro. "La Missione Malaguzzi a Vienna nel 1865-66 per la cessione del Veneto," in *Risorgimento Italiano* XV, 1922, pp. 125 ff., 414 ff.; XVI, 1923, p. 213 ff. Gives the complete story of this interesting if unsuccessful negotiation, from Malaguzzi's diary and certain La Marmora papers. Glimpses behind the scenes in the Hofburg, in the autumn of 1865, must be used with reserve.
- Mack, Eugen. *König Karl I. von Württemberg und die deutsche Frage*. Rottenburg am Neckar 1925. A suggestive sketch.
- Mager, Fritz. *Herzog Ernst II. und die Schleswig-Holsteinsche Frage, 1863-1866*. Greifswald dissertation, 1910. Valuable criticism, using the Coburg archives, and showing Ernst's antipathy to Rechberg and to Prussia in 1864. New documents for the Coburg mediation.
- Malaguzzi-Valeri, Carlo Ludovico. "Trattative segrete italo-austriache prima della guerra del 1866," in *Rivista d'Italia*, 1905, pp. 505-552. Some light on his father's mission to Vienna in 1865.
- Malet, Sir Alexander. *The Overthrow of the Germanic Confederation by Prussia in 1866*. London 1870.
- Marcks, Erich. *Kaiser Wilhelm I.* 8th edition, Leipzig 1918.
- Marcks, Erich. *Otto von Bismarck: Ein Lebensbild*. Stuttgart 1915.
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- Matter, Paul. *Bismarck et son Temps*. 3 vols., Paris 1905-1908. Out of date, but its colors have not faded.
- Maurain, Jean. *La politique ecclésiastique du second empire de 1852 à 1869*. Paris 1931. An important study.
- Maxwell, Sir Herbert. *The Life and Letters of George William Frederick, Fourth Earl of Clarendon, K.G., G.C.B.* 2 vols., London 1913. Clarendon became foreign minister in November 1865, and was Austria's best friend in London.

- Mayer, Franz M. *Geschichte Oesterreichs mit besonderer Rücksicht auf das Kulturleben*. 3rd revised edition, 2 vols., Vienna 1909.
- Mazziotti, Matteo. *Napoleone III e l'Italia. Studio storico*. Milan 1925. A scholarly study aiming to be fair to Napoleon and favoring him over-much.
- Meisner, Heinrich Otto (editor). *Denkwürdigkeiten des General-Feldmarschalls Alfred Grafen von Waldersee*. 3 vols., Stuttgart 1922-1923. Waldersee was Adjutant of Prince Karl of Prussia in 1865-1866. Volume I was used.
- Meisner, Heinrich Otto (editor). *Kaiser Friedrich III. Tagebücher von 1848-1866*. Leipzig 1929. A source of first importance for Austro-Prussian diplomacy.
- Memor, Andreas (pseud. for Gramont, Antoine A.A. Duc de). *L'Allemagne nouvelle, 1863-1867*. Paris 1878. More interesting for the atmosphere of Vienna diplomacy than for new facts. The book was written from Gramont's official despatches, but is much less detailed.
- Menčík, F. "Aus dem Tagebuch des Freiherrn von Poche (1862-64)," in *Oesterreichische Rundschau* VII, 1906, p. 520 ff. Poche was Schmerling's appointee as *Statthalter* of Moravia, also member of the *Reichsrat*. Interesting side-lights on inner politics and opinion.
- Metternich, Pauline von. *Souvenirs de la Princesse Pauline de Metternich, 1859-1871*. Paris 1922. Austrian edition: *Geschehenes, Gesehenes, Erlebtes*. (Vienna 1920). Anecdotes of life at the French court, but nothing on diplomacy.
- Meyer, Arnold Oskar. *Bismarcks Kampf mit Oesterreich am Bundestag zu Frankfurt (1851 bis 1859)*. Berlin 1927.
- Meyer, Arnold Oskar. "Die Zielsetzung in Bismarck's schleswig-holsteinischer Politik von 1855 bis 1864," in *Zeitschrift der Gesellschaft für Schleswig-Holsteinische Geschichte* LIII, 1923, p. 103 ff.
- Meyer, Bernhard von. *Erlebnisse des Bernhard Ritter von Meyer . . . von ihm selbst verfasst*. 2 vols., Vienna 1875. As first secretary of the minister council, Meyer had a rare opportunity to know the leading Austrian personalities. His revelations are frank, though tinged by ultramontane feeling. A rare source. Volume II.
- Mildmay, Herbert St. John (editor). *John Lothrop Motley and his Family. Further Letters and Records, edited by his daughter and Herbert St. John Mildmay*. London and New York 1910. Letters from Motley to Bismarck, and other letters from Vienna during his term of service there.
- Mohl, Robert von. *Lebens-Erinnerungen*. 2 vols., Stuttgart 1902. Mohl was Baden's envoy at Frankfurt from 1861 to 1865. Characterizations of Biegeleben and others, and something on Baden's policy before the war.
- Molisch, Paul. *Geschichte der deutschnationalen Bewegung in Oesterreich, von ihren Anfängen bis zum Zerfall der Monarchie*. Jena 1926. Excellent study, temperate, scholarly, using copious obscure

- printed sources and the protocols of the Austrian minister council. Little connection with diplomacy.
- Moltke, Graf Helmuth von. *Gesammelte Schriften und Denkwürdigkeiten des General Feldmarschalls Graf Helmuth von Moltke*. 8 vols., Berlin 1892-1893.
- Mommsen, Wilhelm. "Zur Beurteilung der deutschen Einheitsbewegung," in *Historische Zeitschrift* CXXXVIII, 1928, pp. 523-543. An admirable, suggestive, and stimulating essay.
- Mülinen, Comte de. *Les Finances de l'Autriche: Etude historique et statistique* . . . Paris 1875. Mülinen was the Austrian chargé in Paris before the war of 1866, and his introduction contains a few remarks of interest for Austrian diplomacy. His article is concerned entirely with Austrian finances after 1866.
- Müller, Karl Alexander von. *Bayern im Jahre 1866 und die Berufung des Fürsten Hohenlohe*. Munich 1909. Excellent and painstaking work, using the printed material exhaustively. On Pfordten's policy in 1866, only partially superseded by Doeberl.
- Münster, George Herbert Count. *Political Sketches of the State of Europe from 1814-1867*. Edinburgh 1858 (translated from the German). Contains an intelligent and temperate survey of Austro-Prussian relations, based on wide diplomatic experience.
- Neue Freie Presse* (Vienna). Founded in September 1864, it was generally hostile to the government. Better informed on relations with France and Italy than with Prussia. Consulted here and there for 1865 and 1866.
- Oncken, Hermann. *Historisch-politische Aufsätze und Reden*. 2 vols., Munich 1914. Volume II, essays on Bismarck's relation to Lassalle and the Liberals. The best short study of Grand Duke Peter of Oldenburg.
- Oncken, Hermann. *Rudolf von Benningsen. Ein deutscher liberaler Politiker. Nach seinen Briefen und hinterlassenen Papieren*. 2 vols., Stuttgart 1910.
- Oncken, Hermann (editor). *Die Rheinpolitik Kaiser Napoleons III. von 1863 bis 1870 und der Ursprung des Krieges von 1870-71. Nach den Staatsakten von Österreich, Preussen und den süddeutschen Mittelstaaten*. 3 vols., Stuttgart 1926. A valuable supplement to the *Origines diplomatiques de la guerre de 1870-1871*. Volume I concerns the period from February 1863 to July 1866, and presents selected despatches of the Austrian and Prussian ambassadors in Paris.
- Oncken, Hermann (editor). *Grossherzog Friedrich I. von Baden und die deutsche Politik von 1854-1871; Briefwechsel, Denkschriften, Tagebücher, hrsg. von der badischen historischen Kommission*. 2 vols., Stuttgart 1927. Some unique material for Austro-Prussian relations.
- Ollivier, Émile. *L'Empire Libéral. Études, récits, souvenirs*. 17 vols., Paris 1895-1915. Volumes VII and VIII cover the years 1864-1866.

- Pahncke, Robert. *Die Parallel-Erzählungen Bismarcks zu seinen Gedanken und Erinnerungen*. Halle 1914.
- Paléologue, Maurice. *Les Entretiens de l'Impératrice Eugénie*. Paris 1928. American edition: *The Tragic Empress* (New York, 1928). Important for French policy, and somewhat damaging to Napoleon and Eugénie.
- Passamonti, E. "Constantino Nigra ed Alfonso La Marmora dal 1862 al 1866," in *Risorgimento italiano* XXII, 1929, pp. 323-469. The letters of the Italian ambassador in Paris, a confidant of Napoleon III, shed new light upon French and Italian policy. The most important Italian publication on this period since Chiala and La Marmora.
- Pastor, Ludwig von. *Leben des Freiherrn Max von Gagern. Ein Beitrag zur politischen und kirchlichen Geschichte des neunzehnten Jahrhunderts*. Munich 1912. Based on Gagern's papers, but very little information on the inner currents of the *Ballplatz* except during 1863-1864.
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